

Nicole Sherzinger's Herbal Essences commercial has serious complications, on page 4.
(Photo by Nicole-Sherzinger.us.)



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American media outlets have sexist coverage of Kurdish women militants. Read more on page 6.
(Photo by Erin Trieb.)

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In this issue...

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For Leelah and Eylül

By Kaylen Sanders

On December 28, 2014, Leelah Alcorn, age 17, posted a suicide note on her Tumblr account. "I'm never going to be happy," Leelah wrote in the post that she queued to be published online in the hours following her death.

On January 5, 2015, Eylül Cansın, age 23, told her mother to take care of her dog. "Whenever you look at it, remember only me," Eylül insisted in a video posted to social media before she took her own life. The transgender identity shared by both of these young women is the thread connecting these two events.

Recent research by the Williams Institute and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention indicates that 46 percent of trans men and 42 percent of trans women in the United States have attempted suicide. Moreover, transgender people make up a disproportionately large share of the population afflicted by "homelessness, domestic violence, mental illness, sexual abuse, and employment discrimination." With statistics like these and heartbreaking suicide notes, it is evident that trans people are plagued by an overwhelming lack of acceptance in society.

Leelah Alcorn was trapped in an unsupportive home where her conservative Christian parents refused to allow her to start transitioning at the age of 16. This was despite the fact that she had felt "like a girl trapped in a boy's body" since the age of four, according to her suicide note.



Leelah Alcorn, pictured above, wrote in her suicide note, "My death needs to mean something."
(Photo by Abigail Jones.)

Eylül experienced a similar sense of being trapped. "I couldn't. I couldn't because people did not let me," she states in a video shared on her Facebook preceding her suicide. The day prior, she had been the victim of a violent physical attack by people whom she called her friends. Frequently, trans people face myriad obstacles to simply being themselves and find that their loved ones have difficulty coming to terms with their identity.

Transgender representation is on a slow rise. The advent of Amazon Prime's poignant original television series, *Transparent*, has brought issues of gender and sexuality to the forefront of screens worldwide with its captivating narrative of a dad revealing her true female identity as Maura to her three adult children. In spite of discrimination, Maura always has her empathetic family and friends to fall back on. However, many trans people, such as Leelah and Eylül, don't always enjoy the fullest extent of this luxury.

Even in a world with eye-opening shows like *Transparent* and Emmy-nominated trans stars like Laverne Cox, it is clear that something is wrong when transphobia still compels trans people to end their lives all too soon. Leelah's death stemmed from isolation and fears of a loveless life. Eylül's death was precipitated by a violent altercation with transphobic attackers.

Leelah wanted her death to mean something; we can make that a reality. Legislatively, we can make that happen by implementing legal methods that encourage trans acceptance, like gender-neutral bathrooms, laws against conversion therapy, and beyond. Furthermore, we can increase positive representation of people who are trans in television, film, books, and the media as a whole. These are all ways to make the world a safer place for our transgender friends.

Yet ultimately, paving a brighter future for transgender people starts in our hearts. It starts with listening, supporting, and seeking to understand even though we may never fully comprehend the trials of being transgender. As feminists, as champions of equality for all human beings, it is not merely a kindness; it is a duty. May Leelah Alcorn and Eylül Cansın rest in peace, and may their untimely deaths inspire us to spark much-needed change. ♦

slutciety

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. We are answering to a need for a premiere feminist publication on college campuses.

Starting Anew: _____

We are Slutciety no more. Although our intentions were to be as inclusive as possible, we failed to see the outright exclusivity of the title of our very own publication.

Black feminists and other women of color, non-heterosexual people, non-cisgender people, and many others are unable to “reclaim slut” for themselves, when they live in a society that already deems them to be fetishes and sexual toys before they even get a chance.

For black women, “slut” has starkly different connotations and meanings than for white women, and those differences cannot be ignored simply for the sake of a catchy zine title. In a letter to the organizers of SlutWalk, the Black Women’s Blueprint wrote, “We do not recognize ourselves nor do we see our lived experiences reflected within SlutWalk and especially not in its brand and its label.”

Many of us will still be empowered by the reclamation of derogatory slurs, but we refuse to force that upon others for any longer. This zine does not stand for a once-size-fits-all feminism, and rather, we will respect and adhere to the words of our fellow feminists.

Furthermore, we realize that the word “slut” can be triggering for many. The word can bring about images of harassment, bullying, and abuse.

We see the shame in our previous name, and we apologize. We are still in the search of a new name. But whatever it is, we promise that it will be respectful and inclusive. ♦

Feminist Vocab of the Month

Pansexual (adjective): attracted emotionally, sexually, or spiritually to all genders and sexes, regardless of biological make-up

Example: I am pansexual, so I am open to people who identify as male, female, or queer. Democratic State House Representative Mary Gonzalez identifies not as lesbian, but as pansexual. The pansexuality flag has a pink, blue, and yellow stripe. Pink for female, blue for male, and yellow for the third gender.

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Share with us your questions and comments.

Tweet us at @Slutciety or email us at slutciety@gmail.com.

Special thanks to Ms. Hirsch and Dr. Bishop for agreeing to support our endeavors.

What are your #FeministNewYearResolutions?

“Avoid using harmful gender binaries in everyday vernacular.”

- Zoë Hannah, sophomore



In 2014, Amani Terrell strutted down the Hollywood Boulevard in just a bikini in a statement about body acceptance and self-love. In interviews, she told reporters that she very believes in self-validation and self-acceptance. For 2015, Amani Terrell inspires our #FeministNewYearsResolutions.

(Left photo by myFoxla.com.)

“Use the F word as often as possible...Feminist.”

- Taylor Mulcahey, sophomore

“Keep dominating class discussion, because I am brilliant and have every right to do so.”

- Amanda Chan, sophomore

“Stop giving excuses just because I don’t want to do something.”

- Olivia Marconi, first-year

“Do more community service to empower underprivileged girls.”

- Elizabeth Chanatry, senior

“Stop apologizing when I ask questions.”

- Olivia DeRicco, sophomore

“Be less accepting of hardcore whiteness in Hollywood.”

- Kenneth Ward, senior

“Keep learning and pass it on.”

- Megan Linger, first-year

The Hairy History of Shaving

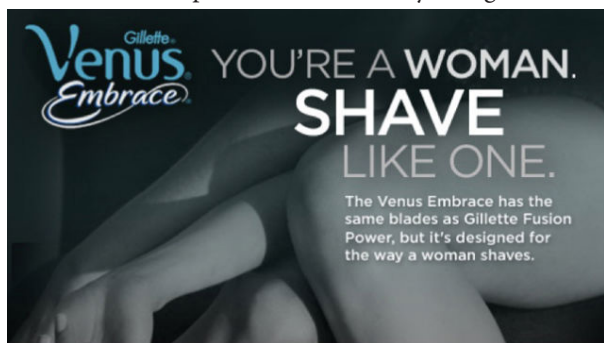
By Olivia DeRicco

The removal of body hair is nothing new. In Ancient Egypt, men shaved their heads and faces because it was thought that a smooth head in combat made it harder for an enemy to grip and behead his victim. Both Romans and the Greeks of high social status were thought to have used pumice to scour the hair off their bodies as a marker of their place in society. Threading originated in Southeast Asia over 6000 years ago, where it was used to groom facial hair. Getting rid of body hair served a number of cultural and aesthetic purposes, but it wasn't necessarily for everyone.

However, today many Americans now consider shaving arm, leg, and pubic hair to be a matter of the utmost importance – at least for women. In 2011, a University of Arizona professor offered extra credit to any female student who refrained from shaving for 10 weeks and kept a journal of their thoughts and reactions, as well as the reactions of others.

All of the women who took part reported negative reactions from their partners and families, regardless of race, class, or sexual orientation. After her boyfriend's explosively angry reaction, one of the participants wrote that she was "Obviously upset and hurt that my partner would put my shaved body on such a pedestal" and that his vehement reaction convinced her she should complete the assignment.

At the same time, they struggled with internalized feelings of disgust; one woman reported "...I constantly thought about my



The Gillette Venus Embrace is the first five-blade razor for women. According to this ad, published in Cosmo, the Venus Embrace is specifically designed for the curvature of women's bodies. (Photo by Jezebel.)

gross hair....it was always on my mind. I couldn't believe how much time I spent thinking about my hair." Another woman wrote that she was baffled by how many people said she was "brave" for taking part in the experiment, saying "People act like I'm standing up to Hitler!"

Removing body hair used to be a matter of opinion; now it's a matter of expectation. Our society's attitudes towards body hair on women has been irrevocably changed by advertising. Seeing a woman with body hair in the media is almost unthinkable, even in popular shows like *The Walking Dead*, where characters are literally fighting for survival in a post-apocalyptic landscape. As they stumble around covered in mud and blood, fighting off zombies, these women have all the time in the world for a leisurely shave. In the *Hunger Games*, a version of this is addressed, as Katniss is subjected to waxing before the games begin - games where she will be fighting other teenagers to the death, and her leg hair should be a complete nonissue.

As ridiculous as this seems, it's not hard to see where the idea originates. Even in ads for razors, women are "shaving" legs that are

already completely smooth, as if the mere sight of leg hair on a woman is too ghastly to show.

In May of 1915, *Harper's Bazaar*, a prominent fashion magazine, ran an ad featuring a carefree young woman in a sleeveless dress, arm flung nonchalantly into the air. The dress itself was shocking for the time period – in 1915, most women's clothing involved high-necked blouses and skirts that brushed the ankle. As if that wasn't enough, her armpits were completely bare.

*"The message was loud and clear:
women who shaved were more
feminine, cleaner, and more desirable."*

Suddenly, middle and upper class American women were considering the state of their own armpits. Almost immediately after the ad was run, the first women's razor hit the market – Gillette's Milady Decollete. The original ad for the razor lauds it as a "dainty toilet necessity" and a safe way to achieve the smooth armpits "demanded both by good grooming and good dressing."

The message was loud and clear: women who shaved were more feminine, cleaner, and more desirable. Even today, most people view hairless armpits as both a matter of hygiene and aesthetics, which speaks to the effectiveness and intensity of the original ad campaign.

Essentially, the *Bazaar* advertisement and the new Gillette campaign played off each other. Women were told to buy dresses that exposed their underarms, so they shaved, which made them feel more comfortable with continuing to buy modern dresses. Fashions continued to shift, and by the 1920's, semi-sheer and sleeveless dresses were wildly popular. However, most women were still pretty ambivalent about shaving their legs. After all, they had fixed the "problem" of their armpit hair – why fret about leg hair? The majority of women didn't walk around with bare legs anyway, due to the popularity of stockings and tights.

Shaving leg hair didn't catch on until the 1940's, when silk typically used in women's stockings was being repurposed for manufacturing parachutes. The resulting shortage meant more women were going bare-legged. Unsurprisingly, razor companies saw their chance and redoubled their efforts to market to women.

Shaving one's legs was framed by women's magazines as the new way to create a polished appearance. At the same time, pin-ups featuring girls with impossibly long, impossibly smooth legs were all the rage with soldiers overseas. American women were cajoled into picking up the razor once more, and it stuck.

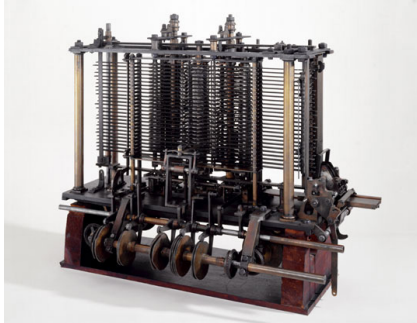
While hair removal has been present throughout history and across cultures, the modern conviction that it is absolutely necessary for women's grooming and hygiene was created by American advertisers throughout the 20th century.

A new feminine ideal meant that they could sell more products, and sell they did. Ads have transformed the way we look at women's bodies, taking something as innocuous and natural as body hair and turning it into something that carries a social stigma. The choice of whether or not to shave is a matter of personal preference, yes. But it's worth remembering that these preferences have been shaped by decades of media bombardment of an idealized woman's form. ♦

The Enchantress of Numbers

By Megan Linger

When you think about the history of computers, where does your mind take you? Where are the roots of the digital age? Names such as Jobs, Wozniak, and Gates might be your first thought, and while that may be a fine starting point, go back farther. With *The Imitation Game* in theaters, pleasing critics and audiences alike, you might suggest Alan Turing. Even then, you would be incorrect. Turing found his inspiration in the writings of someone who preceded him by a century. This someone, the child of one of the era's greatest poets, made plans for computer code in a time before the light bulb. Yes, this month's women in history profile belongs to the confident, indomitable Ada Lovelace.



Though Lovelace's concepts and ideas were certainly used for generations, the whole Analytical Engine was never finished. (Photo by Science Museum/Science & Society Picture Library.)

Augusta Ada Byron was born on December 10th, 1815, in London, England. She was the only legitimate child of Lord George Gordon Byron and his wife, Lady Anne Isabella Millbanke. That Lord Byron? Yes, that Lord Byron. Ada's parents had a brief, rocky marriage, and they separated when their daughter was only a few weeks old.

Perhaps due to the fact that Lord Byron was never especially keen on being committed in a relationship, staying in one place for too long, or doing things that conventional people did, Ada never really knew her eccentric poet father. Ada's mother, understandably upset after having to deal with the complete mess that was Lord Byron, vowed to not let her daughter become a poet. Many people at the time maintained that poetry could make a person very dangerous and very strange, and Lady Millbanke had good reason to believe it.

Instead, Ada learned all she could about science and mathematics, and she was able to count some of the most brilliant people in England at that time among her mentors. When she was still a teenager, Ada met Charles Babbage, a fellow mathematician and unconventional thinker. Even though he was much older than her, the two became lifelong friends, and Babbage took to nicknaming her the "Enchantress of Numbers".

Babbage and his little team had designed what he called the Analytical Engine. Babbage had already created a simple Difference Engine, which historians regard as the first computer. The Analytical Engine was supposed to be more complicated, but Babbage and company were never able to finish it. Even so, Ada helped with the coding. Today, people often think of Ada as the world's first computer programmer.

When Ada was 19, she married William King, with whom she had three children. Her husband earned an earldom a few years into their marriage, making Ada's full, married name "Lady Augusta Ada King, Countess of Lovelace." For the sake of simplicity,

our heroine would come to be known as Ada Lovelace. She did not stop her work when she married, and in fact, she still had yet to make her greatest contribution to the field of computer science.

In 1842, Italian mathematician Luigi Menabrea wrote an article about Babbage's Analytical Engine plans. Babbage asked Ada to translate Menabrea's article into English and add further information.

Ada's "Sketch of the Analytical Engine, with Notes from the Translator" ended up three times as long as the original piece, detailing codes and programs. Some of her concepts are still in use today. In this essay, and throughout her body of work, Ada Lovelace's keen, uncommon intellect is apparent, as well as, despite her mother's best efforts, a bit of a poetic streak.

Sadly, Ada Lovelace succumbed to uterine cancer on November 27th, 1852, at the age of just 36. She is buried beside the father she never knew. ♦

Herbal Orgasm

By Olivia Marconi

Herbal Essences, popular shampoo brand famous for its fragrance and appeal to women, has recently come under question for airing a disturbing new commercial. In it hip-hop star Nicole Scherzinger is seen leaving her seat on an airplane full of primarily men to attend the restroom at the back of the plane. After whipping out her ponytail, Nicole bumps into a button that broadcasts her voice over the airplane intercom.

Once Scherzinger closes the door, she does the only logical thing any woman would do as soon as she boards her flight; she proceeds to pull out a full bottle of shampoo from her purse and begins to wash her hair. After holding the bottle to her nose, the shampoo is magically lathered throughout her hair and the shampoo smells so good that Nicole has...an orgasm?

Shampoo bubbles float around her as she moans with pleasure thanks to an "infused blend of rose hips, vitamin E, and jojoba extracts." The commercial flashes back to the men in their seats, shocked and excited by the screams they hear in the back of the airplane. The male flight attendant even rushes to the back to press his ear against the restroom door. After Nicole miraculously rinses her hair with no water and dries it with no hairdryer, she steps out of the bathroom with stereotypical flawless hair and struts down an aisle of aroused men.

After watching the advertisement for the first time, I reminisced on my last shower. I am disappointed to report that my last hair wash didn't have the same outcome that Herbal Essences promotes. A shampoo that makes women orgasm is perhaps the fantasy for many. But ultimately, the commercial's unrealistic depiction of the female orgasm circulates impractical, inaccurate information and most importantly, pressures women to use their product to satisfy the expectations of men.

First, it is clear that Nicole Scherzinger is not a mirror for the average woman's orgasm by recognizing the obvious; it takes more than the smell of shampoo to get the job done, but the advertisement is adding to an entire culture of misconstrued ideas about sex and the female-assigned body.

In fact, according to Susan Donaldson James, author of "Female Orgasm May Be Tied to Rule of Thumb," three in four women need "sex toys, fingers, or tongues "to reach orgasm, and

10 to 15 percent of women never orgasm at all.

Contrary to what the media illustrates, a woman does not orgasm from smelling shampoo or by awkward, heavy breathing on the face of a male actor. Herbal Essences is contributing to the flow of deceptive sex information. Though those with female-assigned bodies might not actually believe a shampoo induces orgasm, they certainly are entrenched in a culture that mystifies, censures, and shuns women's orgasms. So little accurate information is readily available to female-assigned people, and that is only reinforced with fraudulent cultural messages through advertising.

In addition, the commercial is enforcing the idea that women select the shampoo to content men. As noted earlier, the people on the airplane in the commercial are predominantly male, awakened by the sound of Nicole in the restroom. Herbal Essences is a women's shampoo brand. Why would they use a sexy woman having an orgasm to appeal to women? Advertising has a long history of distorting female-assigned bodies to pursue profits, but this time, the element of female orgasm is present. Unfortunately, the orgasm, instead of focusing on female pleasure, is twisted to portray sexy women catering to men and their hypermasculine sexual desires. The advertisement convinces women that we should choose Herbal Essences because men will find us more desirable. The advertisement promotes the idea that a woman should sculpt her image to create a man's fantasy.

Why are women sexualized in advertisements that are intended to appeal to women just as often as they are used to appeal to men? Are women so concerned about impressing men that we'd choose a certain shampoo brand because we believe it will make us more desired? The answer is found somewhere in the melting pot of a male-dominated society and a sex-obsessed media. Companies such as Herbal Essences should not mock the female-assigned body to advertise their brand. ♦

The Insufficiencies of Sex Ed

By Zoë Hannah

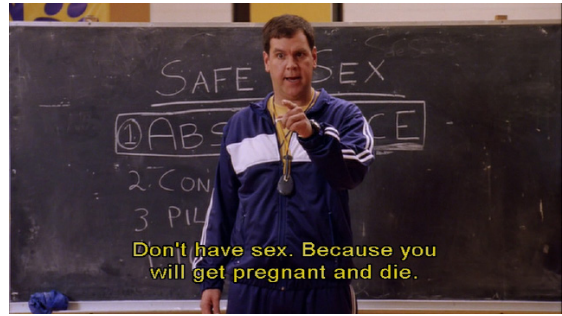
"Sex education" surfaces images of blushing, pubescent teens, shuffling into the auditorium for an hour-long lecture from your sweaty gym teacher about how your bodies are changing. The teacher intermittently supplements his discussion with unfunny and inappropriate jokes. Ultimately, students leave having learned little about teen pregnancy, a few things about HIV, and to practice abstinence. Clearly, abstinence is effective. However, this curriculum problematically omits the discussion of sex itself and, frankly, it doesn't work.

Trans comprehensive sex-ed activist and Chatham University student, Hunter Milroy, spoke with me about his experience with sex ed in middle and high school.

"Sex-ed was not comprehensive. I don't really remember talking about any contraceptives or even talking about sex in general," he testified. "They just didn't put in any effort to discuss anything gender/sexuality wise." Hunter is working to pass a bill that would provide more funding to programs with comprehensive sex education and make comprehensive sex education more accepted and popular.

Currently, only 12 states are required to teach medically accurate sex education. The Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS) studied abstinence-only-until-marriage curriculums and identified numerous examples of the inaccuracies of this method, such as:

"The first player spins the cylinder, points the fun to his/her



The iconic sex ed scene from Mean Girls is commentary on the sheer inaccuracy, scare tactics, contradictions, and rampant heteronormativity present in abstinence-based education. (Photo by VegasSeven.)

head, and pulls the trigger. He/she has only one in six chances of being killed. But if one continues to perform this act, the chamber with the bullet will ultimately fall into position under the hammer, and the game ends as one of the players dies. Relying on condoms is like playing Russian roulette." *Me, My World, My Future, Revised HIV material, page 258.*

This selection is only one piece of fallacious material fed to students of sex ed to scare them off from their own sexual journey and identities. Furthermore, sex ed programs tend to exclude non-cisgender and non-hetero students. In 1998, Pennsylvania approved and implemented a four-year abstinence-only-until-marriage curriculum for public schools.

Various documentations of feedback from educators showed that this method was not only mostly ineffective, but it was also damaging: "Many females reported that sexual abstinence was unrealistic in their world. Without prompting, they described episodes of forced sex." Though some sites received the information positively, the study was deemed ineffective by the time subjects began ninth grade. Many American teens become sexually active in high school and 95 percent of Americans become sexually active before marriage.

Comprehensive sex education is the only inclusive, accurate, and unbiased way to implement sex ed in schools. A 2007 government-funded study reported that teen pregnancy was on the decline, due to teens' increased use of contraceptives, not abstinence.

Despite what many educators want their students to believe, teen sex has proven to be largely unstoppable. Rather than fighting this force, schools need to either omit sex ed (which has been condemned because of the role of sex in high school) or commit to educating their students on what sex really means.

This does not just mean talking about condoms. This means discussing body image, gender identity, and sexual pleasure, even if they are considered taboo. YouTube sex education activist and feminist icon, Laci Green, has worked to break these taboos with her video series, Sex+. The videos present comprehensive, entertaining sex ed information, educating viewers on what a vagina should smell like, sex with disabilities, having sex with your period, and more. The environment that Laci has created online is sex positive, meaning that sex, and all related fields, are discussed in a comfortable, open, and inclusive environment.

According to SIECUS, comprehensive sex education has effectively reduced "risk behaviors," including delaying and reducing sexual activity, as well as increasing condom and contraceptive use. Not only is comprehensive sex ed the only fair and inclusive way to teach sex ed, it is also the only effective and accurate way. ♦

The Journalistic Frames of Women Fighters

By Taylor Mulcahey

In recent months, news has focused heavily on the growing threat of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). A variety of forces have gotten involved in the fight to halt their progress in gaining territory. One such group is Kurdish militias who have been fighting ISIL on the ground for a number of months.

Kurdish forces come from the region of Kurdistan. Kurdistan is a non-state nation formed of ethnic Kurds who create the fourth largest ethnic group in the world. They occupy a territory that consists of parts of Iraq, Syria, Turkey and Iran; however, they have no state autonomy. One notable aspect of these Kurdish forces is their all-female militias.

“The frames used by the US print media reinforce the gender gap and traditional roles for women, and in doing so, they damage the real progress women in the area are making towards gender equality.”

Journalists in the US have been drawn to stories about these female forces because they disrupt the normal views of women in the area, and in a way seem to demonstrate women’s advancement in the region, a concept in which the US is deeply invested.

However, a close look at the US print media shows trends in the reporting on these female militants, and the frameworks used to report on them end up damaging the women’s efforts, and instead of disrupting the common narrative of Middle Eastern women, reinforces traditional gender roles.

An examination of five separate articles from the US print media revealed three common frames that are used when reporting about the Kurdish women involved in the fight against ISIS. The articles that were analyzed came from *The New York Times*, *CNN*, *NBC*, *Marie Claire*, and *American Foreign Policy*. According to Robert Entman, “a frame operates to select and highlight some features of reality and obscure others.”

The terms for these frames were originally coined by Brigitte L. Nacos from Columbia University. Nacos uses these frames to analyze reports on female terrorists, but the following frames hold true for non-terrorist female militants as well. They are “The Physical Appearance Frame,” “The Family Connection Frame” and “The Women’s Lib/Equality Frame.”

The “Physical Appearance Frame” reports on women by focusing on their physical appearance, specifically on their distinctively feminine characteristics. In the article from *NBC*, tucked among images of women doing drills and toting weaponry is a picture of one woman plucking the eyebrows of another, and one of various women braiding each other’s hair.

Another example of a reporter drawing attention to appearance is from *Foreign Policy* when the reporter tells the woman being interviewed, “You are very photogenic.” Focusing on the fighters’ appearance is used both to create a contrast that rouses the readers’ attention, and also to make them seem like average, beautiful women. They are painted in terms of familiar, gender-normative, traditional roles in which women’s beauty matters above anything else.

The “Family Connection frame” refers to the practice of explaining militant women in terms of their families, which happens much more often than when describing militant men.

The articles comment on whether the women have kids, their marital status, question why they are unmarried, or describe their decision to join the force as a result of something that happened to a member of their family.

The article by *NBC* states, “Most are unmarried, and have chosen to dedicate themselves to the struggle.” Not only does this line explicitly comment on the women’s marital status, it also provides an explanation for why they are not married, as if there needs to be a reason for this personal decision.

Foreign Policy also resorts to this frame, making sure to mention that the Kurdish woman joined the force after seeing her brother’s mutilated body from a clash with the police. Each of these practices once again places the woman in a deeply traditional context, taking away from their independent choices and personal motives that lead them to join the fight.

Finally, many journalists use the “Women’s Lib/Equality frame” which frames the militias as feminist movements in themselves. *Marie Claire* suggests the force in itself is a feminist movement, while *The New York Times* states these women “may be the key to upending Kurdistan’s gender inequalities.” This frame is perhaps the most complex because on the surface, it appears to really be supporting gender equality. However, this framework can also be deeply problematic because it continues to feminize the women. It suggests that the women’s interests in joining the force exist specifically because they are women, undermining their complexity and simply contributing to the gender gap. This de-politicizes the women and simplifies their motives, all the while adding to the existing gender divide.



According to the “Physical Appearance Frame,” photojournalists of NBC published this photo to highlight the femininity of the Kurdish soldier.

(Photo by Erin Trieb.)

Kurdistan is a large area with various political parties, regional leaders and cultural considerations. The women involved in the fight against ISIL are no less complex than the region they call home. The frames used by the US print media reinforce the gender gap and traditional roles for women, and in doing so, they damage the real progress women in the area are making towards gender equality.

There is no need for reporters to preserve the femininity of these women. Their femininity is theirs to preserve or abandon. There is no need to discuss each woman’s relationship with her children, or to offer reasons as to why she may be unmarried. These decisions do not affect the way she handles herself in combat, and are her responsibility alone. And there is no need to dilute these women’s motives to those of a fight for equality, for their reasons are as complex as those of the men who also join these Kurdish militias. ♦

Fighting Against Fetishization

By Amanda Chan

As the rate of interracial marriages and dating increases steadily in the United States, millennials rejoice in their generation's achievements in the name of racial tolerance and marvel at the stark rise in adorable biracial babies. According to the 2010 Census, there has been a 28 percent increase in interracial marriages since 2000. However, millennials need not celebrate so blindly, because they are dismissing the vast prevalence of the fetishization of women of color and how this distresses the navigation of relationships and dating.

Women of color who brave dates with potential partners outside of their race must prepare for a prospective barrage of micro-aggressions while already managing the regular complications of dating. Black women suffer from comments on their "chocolate skin" or "booty" from suitors who mistake their racist, fetishistic remarks for suave, Casanova-like banter. Asian women must defend themselves from inquiries about "tight pussies" and "subservience." The normative sexualization of women of color forces them to scrupulously evaluate every relationship to sift out the fetishizers.

Women of color have to navigate decisions and complications outside of just finding someone "nice and funny." Common indicators of a racist include having "yellow fever" or "jungle fever," having political beliefs supporting restrictive immigration policies, having a hobby of criticizing the inherent "racism" in Affirmative Action, and regrettably, having parents who would not "be accepting" of an outsider marrying into the family. The latter has about a half chance of a favorable outcome, because according to a Pew study, only 55 percent of surveyed 50 to 64-year-olds said they were accepting of interracial marriage.

Considered secondary to their white counterparts, women of color face higher sexual assault rates while simultaneously enduring disparagement for their non-Anglo features. Combine higher risk of assault and cultural values that deem darker skin as inferior, and suddenly, a woman of color subjecting herself to further abuse in a potentially fetishistic interracial relationship seems irrational and unsafe.

Even glib romantic pastimes such as hook-up apps and online dating result in racially-charged probing and fetish-motivated solicitation. Instead of a simple "hello, how are you," users all too often send their non-white, women Tinder matches a "holy Asian!" or "hey chocolate mama." To entertain the few, sincere messages, women of color on Tinder must mentally brace themselves for the constant stream of "I've never been with a Latina girl before" or "I'm guessing you're Chinese." This online path to interracial relationships is toxic and exhausting, on top of the usual abuse and harassment that women undergo online.

Not all fetishistic behavior is overt. Most, in fact, manifests in the form of *symbolic violence*, a concept theorized by sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, the everyday tacit methods of social domination.

A recent example is the controversial movie, "The Interview," featuring two white, male protagonists who hypersexualize various Asian women in pursuit of their white-savior, Orientalist, hyper-masculine, sexual fantasy.

Partners of Asian women who purchased "The Interview" were essentially rewarding racist Hollywood producers for releasing a violent film centered around the flippant murders of countless demonized Asian men and the triggering objectification of Asian women. Going into the film, they were aware of the vehement

anti-Asian sentiment they were about to witness, but they overlooked it in hopes of an entertaining movie. They gave the racist movie a chance.

A 2010 Pew study reports that 9 in 10 millennials accept interracial marriages within the family, but it is evident that good intentions do little to prevent the virulent racial aggression and attack on women of color. The prevailing hypersexualization of women of color indicates that interracial relationships can still be dangerous and unhealthy. The fetishization of women of color leaks into relationships like an insidious poison, and yet again, women of color are left with few options that do not result in racial and sexualized violence. ♦

Hispanic and Latinx

By Emily Steele

Following English, Spanish is the second most spoken language in the United States, yet many Americans know so little about the language. The Hispanic culture in the US continues to grow, now at more than 37.4 million Hispanic-Americans, and composes over 13 percent of the country's population. It is expected that by the year 2040, Hispanics will compose 22.3 percent of the total population in our country.

Westerners tend to label the largest minority group of the United States using many terms like Hispanic, Latin, Spanish and, perhaps most ignorantly, "Mexican."

This isn't including the crude racial slurs that litter American vernacular. Spanish is the official language in 20 different countries and is spoken in many others. It is absurd and inconsiderate to label someone as Mexican when they could be from Peru, Bolivia, Argentina, Spain, Ecuador, Puerto Rico, Costa Rica, Chile, or a number of other Spanish-speaking countries. The United States should be more informed about where their neighbors are from and what is politically correct when referring to their origin.

When someone is "Hispanic," they are either from a Spanish-speaking culture or ancestry. This primarily originates from the South American or Caribbean region, where the Spanish, as in people from Spain, heavily colonized in the 16th century. Because Spanish is the official language of many South American countries, a Hispanic individual is fluent in Spanish, but their primary language could be either English or Spanish. "Hispanic" refers more to a language than a specific country. Some say that "Hispanic" is outdated, because it is founded on the pillages of Spain. Many African or Indian people who might fit the definition of "Hispanic" are reluctant because the word erases their origin.

Latino refers to just the opposite. It refers to geographical origin, rather than the language a person speaks. Individuals with Latin American ancestry are Latin, but not always Hispanic. For example, Brazilians speak Portuguese, not Spanish. However, they are from Latin roots--meaning they are Latin but not Hispanic. Additionally, "Latinx" references the same as Latino, but it erases the gender binary.

These terms are not interchangeable. While there are technical definitions for these names, it is important to remember that Hispanics and Latinos also have their own preference on which is correct based on where they come from, their race, and the time period they were raised in. The United States lacks reliable health care, job opportunities, insurance, and many other necessities for Hispanic-Americans and Latin-Americans. The least we can do is identify our fellow American citizens with respect. ♦

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