

# LEZ

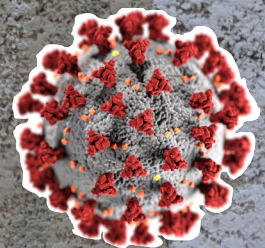
PANDEMIC ISSUE #2



Colonialism

Capitalism

Neo  
Liberalism





Little Feminist Zine  
Pandemic Issue #2

March 2021

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Thanks to all the contributors!

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Our continued thanks to all of the front line workers keeping us safe in this pandemic!

The Little Feminist Zine (LFZ) began as a class project in a Winter 2020 Gender Sexualities and Women’s Studies (GSWS) 1101 at Douglas College. You can check out our first issue here: <https://dc.arcabc.ca/islandora/object/dc%3A42375>. Planned as a paper zine to be distributed in “little libraries” around our Coquitlam and New Westminster campuses the project took on new life as an ezine after the sudden pandemic lockdown. All works that appear in this issue, with the exception of the Pack a.d. interview were produced in the Fall 2020 semester in the GSWS classes of Sally Mennill (History) and Jaime Yard (Anthropology). Special thanks to Maya Miller, Becky Black and Mychal Bruyere for our feature interview, and to Bri Mauro for copy editing.

# Mother, \_\_\_\_\_ Mother

By Emma Quan

You said yes,  
you said no.  
Mixed feelings  
as your life changes.  
Help wanted.

Mother, judge mother.  
It all starts at home.  
All you have to do is  
find your purpose.  
All you have to do is  
recreate the perfect

home, parent, baby, behavior,  
citizen, community, family, life.

Mother, beautiful perfect mother.  
New gold standard?  
Obedience, compliance.  
Ponytail by day, little black dress by night.  
Mother, fairytale mother.  
Mother, tired of being mother.  
Needs help.

Talk to us...  
I can't say anything.

In the news,  
political parasites. Under the influence,  
worshipping holy power.  
The only goal:  
Protect specific life.  
Mother, protected mother.  
Mother, not protected mother.  
Baby, protected baby.

Eyes closed,  
contradictory against reality.  
Ban science, experts, the truth, choice.  
Choice, lost in the crowd of  
radical strangers.  
Mother, murderous mother.  
The first sin – crime.

It's a simple equation.  
I don't think it is.

Mother, problem mother.  
Do we really need interventions?  
Interventions were necessary.  
Interventions were not necessary.

Mother, superior mother.  
Do we really need  
appropriate medical attention  
preventative care, caring voices, dignity?  
Do you really need?  
Mother, illegal mother.  
Mother, mistaken identity mother.  
You don't deserve  
appropriate medical attention,  
preventative care, caring voices, dignity.

No!

*continued on next page...*





We deserve  
appropriate medical attention,  
preventative care, caring voices, dignity.

Costly fees.  
Underground procedure.  
Mother, not protected mother.  
It's a simple equation.

Culture, history, emotions, currency,  
trust, prejudice, advantages, disadvantages.  
Is there a correlation?

There is a correlation.

Mother, political mother.  
The worldwide power struggle,  
the worldwide social movement,  
the worldwide shared story.

Reproduction legislation,  
break the cycle.  
Future imperfect.  
Nothing is easy.  
Mother, I prevail mother.

Mother, revolution mother.

Mother,  
modern; perfect; beautiful; caring;  
protected; ambitious; private;  
shared; underground; secret; problem;  
tired; international; aging; mature;  
political; "give a damn"; human;  
mother.

Mother, human mother.

Human.

## About the Poem

"...the right to reproduce and the right not to—the right to bodily self-determination—is a basic human right, perhaps the most foundational human right" (Ross & Solinger, 2017, p. 56).

"Mother, \_\_\_\_\_ Mother" is a 'found poem' created from magazine clippings and made into a stop-motion video.

The poem explores some of the discourse surrounding reproductive rights in connection to identity, bodily autonomy, gender normativity, intersectionality, and—ultimately—reproductive rights as human rights. I use "mother" as a symbolic representation of the social norms and idealized expectations of what often is believed to constitute a "mother;" however, I want to recognize that "mother" as an identity is not necessarily representative of all who birth or parent a child. Likewise, "mother" is not exclusive only to those who give birth but is an identity or self-categorization that transcends binary notions of gender and sexuality.

## Bibliography

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Song: "Love in the Air" by Ahjay Stelino from <https://mixkit.co>

## About the Author

Emma Quan (she/her) is a recent graduate of Douglas College having completed an Associate of Arts with a concentration in History. She will be continuing her studies at UBC with a focus on Canadian social history, women and gender studies, public history, and museums and archives. She is also a council member of the British Columbia Historical Federation and enjoys combining artistic endeavours with academic scholarship to engage and connect people with history. In the future, she hopes to continue working and learning in the realm of historical research, community heritage, and social justice.

## Link to Stop Motion Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X12wx23gs9I>

**"Always play music for yourself, first and foremost"**



**interviewed by Mychal Bruyere**





**Can you tell us a little about yourself?**

My name is Maya Miller and I am the drumming half of The Pack a.d. I drum for a living and I live in Vancouver.

I'm Becky Black, I too live in Vancouver and play music for a living. My last "real" job was maybe 14 years ago, as a gas station attendant. I quit that job to go on tour and never looked back.

**What made you want to play music?**

Maya: I suppose honestly, it was a super fun thing to do with my friends. Before Becky and I became The Pack a.d, we were in a four piece with two other friends. The band didn't last long but it was such a fun summer. Now, I feel lucky that I still get to play music with my best friend.

**What are your favorite genres of music?**

Becky: Any and all genres. I always think the broader the influences, the better. If a song moves me, it doesn't matter if it's an ambient soundtrack, country, or death metal.

**Who are your favorite artists?**

Maya: So hard to narrow down but I'll try to keep it short: Mount Kimbie, Frank Ocean, Metronomy, King Krule, James Blake, Laurie Anderson, Kate Bush.

**What is your earliest memory of music?**

Becky: My earliest memories of music is sitting around the campfire on family trips and hearing my grandfather playing banjo and harmonica, with the whole family singing along. I also remember getting my first cassette, "Who's Zoomin' Who?" by Aretha Franklin and choreographing dances to every song.

**What kinds of music do you play, or enjoy playing?**

Maya: I love playing punk/garage rock, especially as a drummer. It's messy and sweaty and honestly just so much fun to get really scrappy with it.

**Do you write? (lyrics, music, song composition)**

Maya: We both write lyrics for our songs and often a lot of the songs are a combined effort lyrically.

**What's your daily routine like these days?**

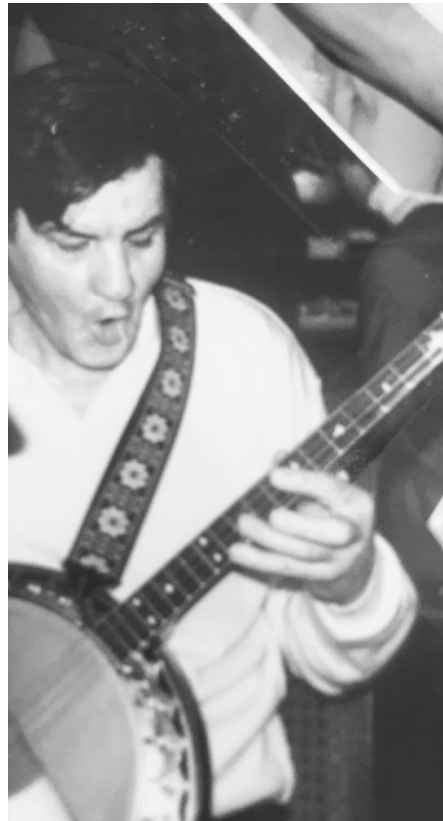
Maya: At the moment, due to not being able to play shows or tour, I've been focussing on writing a book about my life in a rock n' roll band. I work on that in one form or another every morning.

**How about show days?**

Maya: Gosh, that question just makes me miss show days! If it were a show day, I would probably be sitting in the van driving to the venue, then load in and soundcheck, light dinner and then play. Every day on tour can be really different so my only routine would probably be how I stack my clothes when I change into show clothes.

**Do you get the "jitters" or get nervous the day of (I still do:)?**

Maya: Once in a while, I'll have a moment before a show, but as soon as I head to the stage, it evaporates. I find it helpful to remember that



Left: Llewellyn "Bud" Black, Becky's grandfather, on banjo. A firefighter by career, Bud Black is a man of many stories. At different times in his life he made his living playing for tips on the Bowen Island ferry; he was an

amateur boxer who sparred with Rocky Marciano; and he was a champion dahlia gardener! He is pictured here playing for friends and family as in Becky Black's earliest memories of music.

*The Pack a.d.*



*It was fun while it lasted*



the worst thing that could happen is a mistake but because you keep playing - even if anyone noticed, that flub is over in a heartbeat. That, and the audience is there to see you: they're on your side!

**How about right before you take the stage? could you describe the feeling or emotion you get in that moment for us?**

Becky: I always feel like I need to use the bathroom the moment it's time to hit the stage, but there's no time, and maybe the only bathroom is a single stall with a lineup.

**Do you have any favorite hobbies?**

Maya: I'm obsessed with getting total completion on Red Dead Redemption 2. Also, I'm a voracious reader and I play tennis. Oh, and prior to COVID, I liked playing D&D with my family.

**What do you like to do on your spare time?**

Becky: I enjoy drawing and painting, reading, taking my dog for walks, being a couch potato (maybe too often), and camping. I used to enjoy spending time with friends but it's hard to remember what that feels like.

**Do you have a favorite sports team?**

Maya: LA Kings. LA Dodgers.

Becky: I'm a Canucks fan, even though it can often be a painful experience.

**Do you have a favorite athlete?**

Maya: Naomi Osaka

**What inspires you?**

Becky: Books, movies, my own life struggles.

**Do you have any words of inspiration for us?**

Maya: Always play music for yourself, first and foremost.

You can follow the Pack a.d.  
@thepackad on instagram.



# Autoethnographies of **COMING OF AGE**

autoethnography: a research strategy and genre of writing that narrates personal experiences, placing them in broader--social, historical, economic, political--context. An attempt to reflexively understand the self as conditioned by culture.



Margaret Mead photographed by the Sydney afternoon daily The Sun, on August 25, 1951 (lasers added).

What might a healthy coming of age look like? A first answer might contain having access to accurate knowledge about our bodies, access to birth control and protection against sexually transmitted diseases. We might elaborate that not only understanding of consent but also the confidence and self assurance to assert desires and boundaries is needed. Sadly, all too often one or more of these elements are missing from the education we receive from our families, schools and communities. We are left to to our own devices for the practical aspects of navigating our objectifying and often predatory sexual cultures.

In the 1920's a young Margaret Mead, 23, set out to Samoa armed with questions about whether the distress commonly associated with adolescence in the West was universal or a matter of social and cultural convention. Was it possible to be introduced to adult responsibilities and pleasures without shame and distress, she asked? While many questions have circulated about the veracity of her findings, Mead argued that the distress associated with sexual exploration was not natural and inevitable. On the beaches of Samoa she interviewed young women and fa'afafine (Samoan for "in the manner of a woman" persons who engage in both masculine and feminine social roles) to assemble an account of a comparatively smooth process of romantic and sexual exploration. She framed the romances and play of Samoan youth as a gentle and seamless introduction to the responsibilities and pleasures of sexuality.

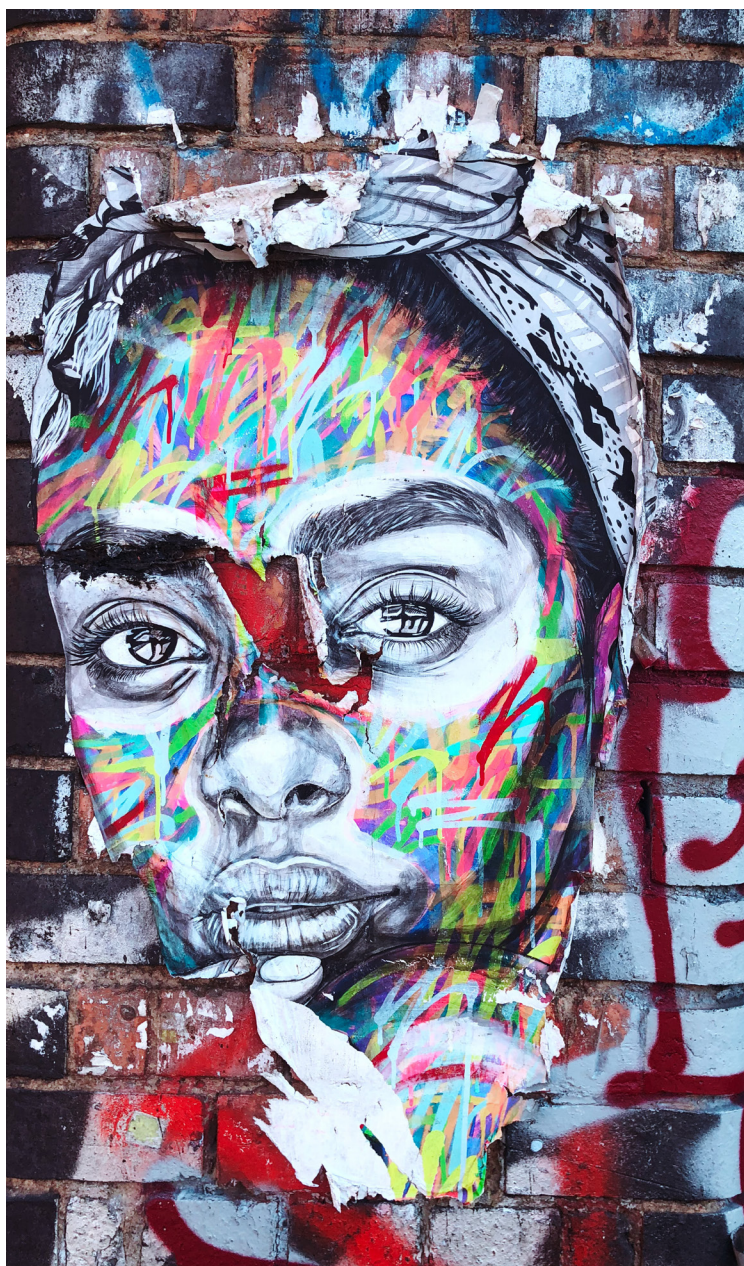
While many have taken issue with her research methods and her findings the resulting book *Coming of Age in Samoa: A Psychological Study of Primitive Youth for Western Civilization* (1928) was an international sensation and made Mead a household name in North America. Did Mead overextend her data in her arguments? Absolutely. Was she more concerned about her American audience than the effects on her Samoan informants and thier descendents? Certainly. Did *Coming of Age in Samoa* have a dramatic impact that is still felt today in both "the West" and Samoa? Without a doubt. Whether her research data was sound or the result of an elaborate joke played upon Mead by her informants, arguably she still deserves credit for opening a vital conversation about the need for less objectifying, exploitative, violent and all-or-nothing approaches to sexual expression. Once one of the most respected and cited working

anthropologists in the world, Margaret Mead has over time slipped from anthropological icon to almost a disciplinary embarrassment for her willingness to speak boldly and publically on a broad range of controversial issues including race and sexuality. Her writing, from the 1920 through the 1970s, challenged, and often changed, public consciousness to move towards the liberal ideals of inclusion and equality for people of all cultures, sexes, genders and sexual orientations. While her works now appear to us as dated, arguably the language and frames we use to talk about racialization, gender and sexuality changed, at least in part, because she forced it to: she was a catalyst for changes that moved beyond her. For example, in today's vocabulary Mead might represent herself as a bi-or-pan-sexual polyamorous woman; while in her own time she was predominantly understood as a somewhat promiscuous serial-monogamist who defied traditional gender roles.

*Coming of Age in Samoa* is perhaps now best encountered as an historical document that showcases Mead's ardent desire to prove that our cultural attitudes towards sexual development matter. Sexual education should not be left to pop culture where tropes of pliant, often underage, women, conquest, the virgin/whore dichotomy, and heterosexual and homophobic images are still predominant. What if, like Mead, we believed that writing back to this toxic culture could have an impact and create more room for dialogue, exploration and compassion? Crucially, what if instead of looking for a cultural "Other" to exploit for this end we wrote our own stories reflecting back what was missing in our own cultures and experiences? Can such writing incite necessary conversations that, in many cases, we wished had happened earlier; that we want to happen more frequently?

Eshewing representations of exotic others for honest autoethnographic portraits of partial selves-in-process, the articles in this section urge further dialogue. We hope that they can be a part of cobbling our way toward a sexual culture less saturated with secrecy, shame and confusion. The themes that emerge in these pieces are not always easy--the hesitancy to talk to beloved caregivers for fear of losing innocence in their eyes; the overwhelming responsibility placed on young women to act as sexual gatekeepers; the clash of traditional ideals about gender roles and desires for lasting intimacy with mainstream "hook up" culture--but they reflect both the worlds we grew up in, and the changes we want, for all those coming of age.





## “Precocious Puberty”

by Olivia Molemba

*Sexualization. Hypersexualization.  
Adultification Bias.  
Where does it end?*

In mid-August, 1997, I became my parent’s first born daughter. Before me, my mom had given birth to four boys in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). In 1993, my dad had moved the family to Canada in hopes of ensuring a better life for his children. Everywhere in the world, attitudes about sexuality and sexual behaviour are shaped in and by society and culture. Each new generation inherits, adapts and passes down what they have learned. Being born to immigrant parents who had spent the first 35 years of their lives in Africa meant that the attitudes towards sexuality and sexual behaviour that they were taught are what I, too, would be taught and expected to teach my own children one day. Although I was born and raised in Canada, my parents emphasized that it was important not to follow beliefs that were different from their own.

My parents never failed to remind me that I shouldn’t have sex or even a boyfriend until I finished school. I was okay with this and had actually vowed to follow through with a promise to save myself for marriage. Unfortunately, I learned at a young age how prevalent adultification bias (the tendency to treat pubescent girls as women in sexual culture) and the hypersexualization of young Black girls was (and is). My parents believed that they were my protectors as I was growing up. Don’t get me wrong... they absolutely were! But there comes a point in life where you stop telling your parents everything.

Growing up as a Black girl, I had to deal with the harmful perception that I was more adult-like and less innocent because I had already developed breasts, a curvy figure and a large bum by the age of 9. Medical professionals consider this what’s called “precocious puberty.” There were a lot of things I felt that I just couldn’t speak about with my traditional African parents so I kept a lot to myself. By the time I was 11, I had been sexualized by my elementary and high school teachers; called a prostitute by my classmates, and, I’d been catcalled by older men while walking home from school all because of my developed body. I was scared because I still didn’t really understand how my body could make me look so much old-

er. I was tired of being looked at differently and I just wanted to get away from it all.

In 2009, I was 12-years-old and was going to visit the Congo for the first time ever. This trip changed my life... but not for the better. I got to meet both of my parents' families, mostly my mom's as I had gone on the trip with her, my two younger sisters and one of my brothers while my dad and three other brothers stayed home in Vancouver. I was introduced to one of the children of my mom's cousin. His name was Christopher. I can't remember how much older he was than me at the time but I know he was at least 3 years older. He was nice. He introduced me and my sisters to his friends and to other kids our age. He spent a lot of time hanging out with us. I thought

**“‘Precocious puberty’ refers to appearance of secondary sexual characteristics before the age of nine years in girls and 10 years in boys (Mouridsen & Larsen, 1992). Because of the negative connotations, we have chosen to replace the term with ‘early pubertal development’ (EPD) to describe earlier than expected development of secondary sexual characteristics and reproductive capacity.”**

Liao, Missenden, Hallan and Conway. “Experience of early pubertal development: a preliminary analysis.” *Journal of Reproductive and Infant Psychology*, Vol. 23, No. 3, August 2005, pp. 219-233.

it was because his mom made him, or because he wanted us to feel comfortable as it was our first time visiting.

As I was on this trip, I forgot all about having been looked at as older than my actual age because that's not what I was treated like when I was around all of my relatives. That was until one day, Christopher began to look at me as more than his cousin. He began to want to spend time with just me rather than with me and my sisters. He would invite me to his room or go to a place where no one was around. I didn't think anything of it because it was still all innocent until it wasn't.

One day I had been taking a nap in his room while

our moms spoke in the living room and he was at school. He had come home to me sleeping in his bed and that's when this trip that I was so happy to be on turned into a nightmare I wanted to wake up from. I had been awoken from my nap to see him fondling my breasts. He proceeded to trace his hand down to my bum and rub and pat it. Our eyes met and he smiled and said in our native language “*nzoto nayo eza ndeti yaya mukolo*” which essentially meant “your body is like that of an older woman”.

After this, I had one month left of being on this trip and the sexual objectification and sexual abuse by him continued. I felt used and I was mad at God for giving me a body that men, even men in my own family, would sexualize. When I returned back home to Canada, I had nightmares for months. I was depressed, withdrawn, and had PTSD whenever a male would be too close to me. My body continued to be sexualized in the later years of my adolescence by my teachers, my brothers' friends and strangers who catcalled me as I walked down the streets. When I was 16, a twenty-year-old neighbour preyed upon me. What guidance did I have on how to handle older men and their unwanted advances? What guidance do we give young women for this?

Responses to and perceptions of precocious puberty is something that affects many young Black women profoundly. Precocious puberty is something that affects young Black girls dispro-



**#FREEBRITNEY**



portionally. The medical literature reinforces centuries of sexual objectification of Black women. We have to carry the hypersexualization of our bodies from such a young age often resulting in traumas that we still carry on our shoulders as women. We become the object of desire for men who are our age but also for men who are much older than us (Epstein et. al, 2017).

**“Sadly, in my experience, there are more personal negative consequences than there are social actions to combat the hypersexualization of young-women.”**

The main issue with hypersexualization is the objectification of girls and women. Hypersexualization happens when adult sexuality is forced onto young children and adolescent teenagers (Anderson et. al, 2018). Many young black girls are pressured to behave in the context of adult sexuality because of how many of our bodies develop fully at such a young age. We have this sexuality forced onto us when we don't even have the maturity to fully understand the consequences. Stereotypes of Black women were created as a part of dehumanizing colonial representations of black bodies. In America, Black women have been portrayed hypersexual “bad Black girls” since as early as the 1630s and still to this day (Anderson et. al, 2018).

Contemporary media also plays a significant role in the sexualization of women. The sexualization of Black girls is extremely evident in rap music videos. Women have always been portrayed differently in music videos compared to men. They're valued for not only their appearances but also for their abilities to entertain and pleasure men. Sika Dagbovie-Mullins says in her article “Pigtails, Ponytails, and Getting Tail: The Infantilization and Hyper-Sexualization of African American Females in Popular Culture” that “representations of black girlhood in the media and popular culture suggest that black girls face a different set of rules when it comes to sex, innocence, and blame” (Dagbovie-Mullins, 2013). The common rap music video nowadays will feature women of many different ethnicities, however, most Black women are cast for these music specifically because they have large breasts and big bums. In these videos, the camera points directly to those physical characteristics.

Pornography is also a significant part of this problem when it comes to the sexualization of young girls. Men are influenced by pornographic images and videos and many of them attempt to reproduce these in their personal lives. For example, many pornographic videos promote having sexual intercourse with “young teenage schoolgirls”: fueling this fantasy of course has direct implications for actual young women. Videos like this being watched by men result in young girls being objectified and victimized. The influence of the media has greatly impacted many innocent young girls because they've never asked for their bodies to be sexualized. At young and impressionable ages they are encouraged and coerced to adopt sexualized attitudes and behaviors that they're not intellectually prepared for.

A survey conducted by the Georgetown Law Center compared white girls and Black girls of the same age. In that survey, participants perceived that Black girls know more about adult topics and about sex (Epstein et. al, 2017). Again, this simply has to do with the development of our bodies at a young age. I believe this, alongside the issue of hypersexualization in the media are the reasons for the many unsettling and traumatic events in my adolescent years. Reflecting on these events, I can identify them as being the root causes for my anxiety and depression. Sadly, in my experience, there are more personal negative consequences than there are social actions to combat the hypersexualization of young-women.

Many young girls face cognitive, emotional, mental and physical consequences of early and hypersexualization. The sexualization and objectification causes girls to feel uncomfortable and less confident in their bodies which leads to feelings of shame, self consciousness and anxiety. Sexualization is also linked to mental health problems such as depression. Additionally, being sexualized at such a young age affects sexual development. It makes it very difficult to develop a healthy sexual self image because society already has their perceptions and ideals. I was being sexualized from as early as 8-years-old and the personal consequences have been severe.

Many young Black girls, especially those with immigrant parents, never open up to their families about these situations because we know how the blame can easily get put on us. Many Black families prioritize protecting the predators in their families instead of keeping them away from the child that they are emotionally, mentally or physically harming. I wish I could have told my parents everything that happened to me growing up. Being sexualized and having my young body image hypersexualized in the media was never my fault. Society needs to sort out where to put the blame because it has never been or will never be the victim's fault.

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**“In line with contemporary feminist work on ‘sexualization’, I want to argue that becoming accountable for anticipating girls’ futures differently means challenging this conflation between sexuality and danger and loss and avoiding figuring early development in inherently negative terms. Articulating a feminist response to early puberty requires noticing which girls are figured in discourses of early puberty and critically tracing how concerns about ‘premature’ sexual development might build on discriminatory discourses around class and race.”**

-Celia Roberts, 2013



# Jahaan Phool Wahaan Kaante

(*"No Rose Without Thorns"*):

## A Woman's Place in Pakistani Society

by Adeema Malik

I am a 25-year-old Pakistani woman, currently living and studying in Canada. The inspiration for my topic of study comes from 23 years spent living in Pakistan—my own personal experiences, and those of the women in my life. It is hard growing up within a society that still finds it difficult to trust women and to grant them their independence. I, myself had to fight, hide, and lie to secure my happiness and freedom, most times, for matters that may seem trivial to an outsider. In this study, I intend to share some experiences of growing up in Pakistan, as an unmarried student in a Muslim society, and how the overwhelming fear of “meeting boys,” sexual awakenings, and living under constant scrutiny has both shaped and severely restricted the way I have and continue to live my life.

The first time I realized it wasn't exactly “normal” for a girl to associate with boys was probably at the age of 13. I had met and become friends with a boy next door. The friendship lasted little more than a day before my mother “caught” us playing cricket in the space outside our flats, where we had lived at the time. The next day, when my friend asked for me at the door, my mother told me to go to him, and, in my state of complete befuddlement about the situation, announce that I would no longer be seeing him, after being informed by my mother, that I wasn't allowed to befriend boys. I was both embarrassed and guilty, and suddenly felt as if there was something wrong with me. Of course, this was only the beginning of it all, but this is as far back as I can remember understanding what, as a girl in my family, I was and wasn't allowed to do, and that questioning this part of my life, or trying to act against it, would cause me a lot of trouble.

Growing up in Pakistan, women realize how much easier it is for them to “dishonour” the family or commit acts that are perceived to go against religious teachings. While on the other hand, men can do the same without being reprimanded, hu-



miliated, or punished in the same way women are. Women can choose between two options. The first option is to remain caged, live under constant surveillance, and accept our families' control over our lives. The second option being we have to hide, risk “double lives,” and spend years fighting with our families to reclaim some of the freedom we lost from the moment our boobs started to sprout. I chose the latter path in life. Although fortune favoured me in the sense that my family wasn't as cruel as I had seen other families act towards “mutinous” daughters, I still had a difficult time convincing my parents to, in one way or the other, let me live.

By the time I was in high school, the majority of us (girls) suddenly realized dating would not be easy—for some of us, just being caught standing next to a boy might've ended in us being stripped of those essential things in life we deserved. And, yes, at times it mattered what type of people you were born into—more traditional, religious families would make matters a lot worse for their daughters, than, say, a wealthy family where half the relatives live in England and have married foreigners and speak English without a thick accent—but

that isn't always true. I have seen intelligent, modern, outwardly "civilised" people destroy the lives of the women in their families. We call these types (because there is such an abundance of them) *paray likhay jaahil*, which loosely translates to: educated illiterates.

There were several "types" of girls at school, and then several ways in which we would all oppose the rules and individual duties our families had laid out for us to obey and follow. Some of us had no choice but to obey and follow, out of real fear of punishment and long-term consequences. Some of us would do everything we wanted in secret, despite the possibility of getting caught, and manage to hide it so well from our families, that not one person would ever find out. Then there were those who, like me, would fight endlessly to convince our families that the rules and duties they so wished us to obey and follow blindly were limiting, sexist, and would so often make us feel more like property than human beings with feelings and desires.

In my teens, I'd discovered that there were far better options than pining over somebody and imagining a relationship with them from a distance. But rebelling against this "role" proved to deliver its own consequences. I remember once sneaking out with my first boyfriend and his friends and being too afraid of my parents finding out, to even talk, or eat, or smile. I thought that if I get caught with a boy, my father will hit me, and take my phone, and never allow me to see my friends or leave the house. My mother will stand in a corner somewhere, sympathising internally, but will not intervene. In these matters, however, I was luckier than most, because my father loved me too much to remain unhappy with me or to keep me locked away for too long. If you are a girl and your father loves you, truly loves you, you are one step closer to freedom than everyone else. I had that, my pigheadedness, and one foot already out the door.

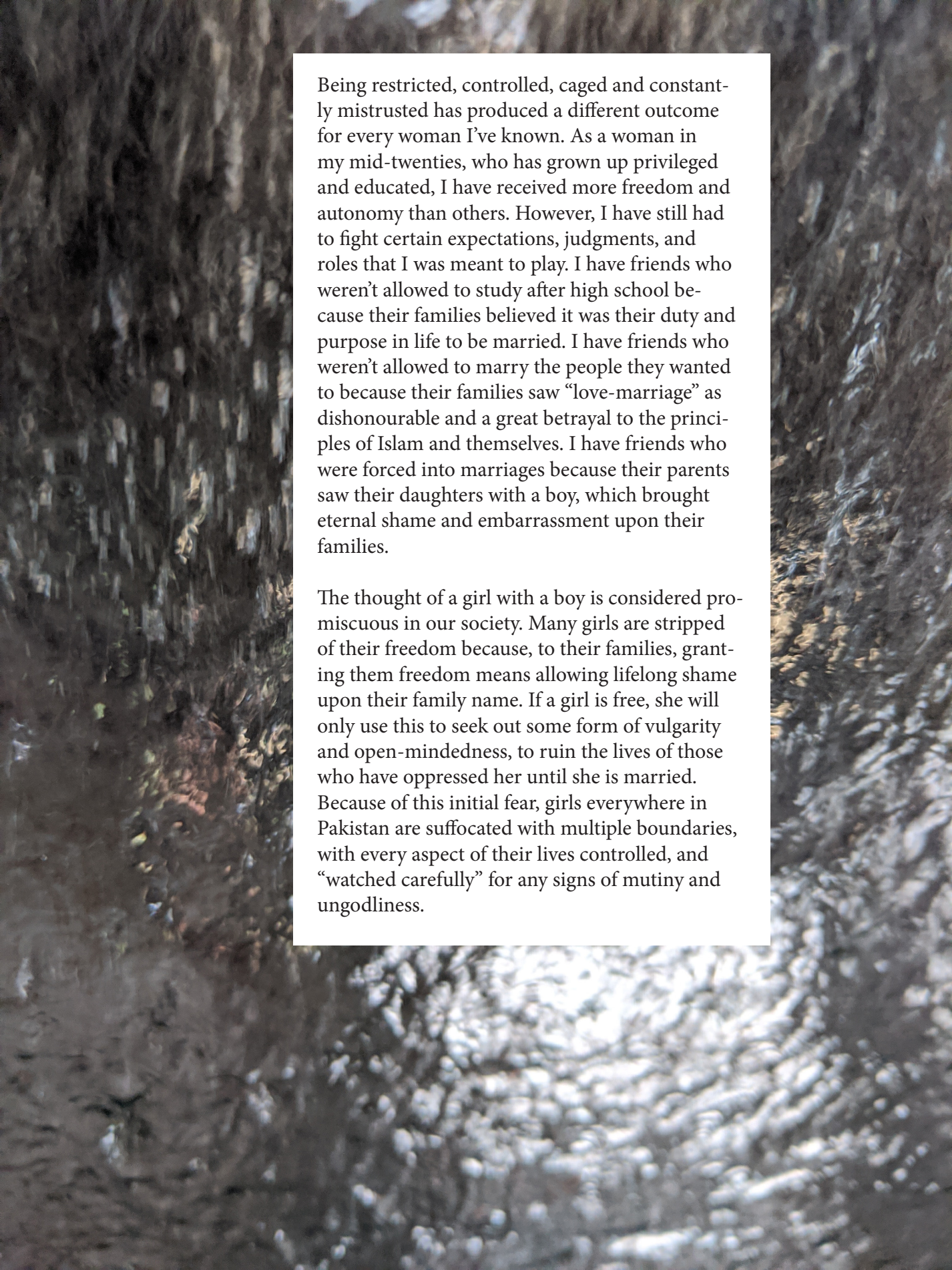
Nobody anywhere in Pakistan turns a blind eye to a girl "expressing" herself. I cannot hold the hand of the person I love in public; I

cannot sit close to them in public places without being observed; I cannot quietly, and without being judged, get into or out of the car of a boy despite the nature of our relationship. If you are a girl in Pakistan, then you are often little more than a piece of meat—you are available property for every man who sees you this way, and most of them do. If I go out with a boy, I will pick somewhere empty—because I don't want to be seen with him, because I don't want to be stared at or thought of as his thing. And even when I am with him, I keep an eye out for stragglers; it would kill me if someone saw me, in my tight jeans and short top, sitting and smiling and talking to a boy. At that moment, I am his, and not the least bit in a romantic sense. It's hell. It's impossible to "meet boys" in public if you're an unmarried girl. It's impossible to be seen with a boy and also to be left alone.

Once, in my mid-teens, for a high school event, we had turned a large classroom into a makeshift dance floor for the evening. Both boys and girls from different classes were together—one of my close friends, who comes from a wealthy family where all the children are enrolled into expensive, private schools, was seen dancing with a boy by her mother, who had suddenly appeared unannounced. Her mother had come into the room, hit her daughter multiple times in front of everyone at school for standing two feet from a boy, and forced her to leave. This event caused my friend to drop out of our school and enroll in a different one. I didn't see her for almost a year after.







Being restricted, controlled, caged and constantly mistrusted has produced a different outcome for every woman I've known. As a woman in my mid-twenties, who has grown up privileged and educated, I have received more freedom and autonomy than others. However, I have still had to fight certain expectations, judgments, and roles that I was meant to play. I have friends who weren't allowed to study after high school because their families believed it was their duty and purpose in life to be married. I have friends who weren't allowed to marry the people they wanted to because their families saw "love-marriage" as dishonourable and a great betrayal to the principles of Islam and themselves. I have friends who were forced into marriages because their parents saw their daughters with a boy, which brought eternal shame and embarrassment upon their families.

The thought of a girl with a boy is considered promiscuous in our society. Many girls are stripped of their freedom because, to their families, granting them freedom means allowing lifelong shame upon their family name. If a girl is free, she will only use this to seek out some form of vulgarity and open-mindedness, to ruin the lives of those who have oppressed her until she is married. Because of this initial fear, girls everywhere in Pakistan are suffocated with multiple boundaries, with every aspect of their lives controlled, and "watched carefully" for any signs of mutiny and ungodliness.



# 86 respect for Women?

by Kylie Karoway

Working as a server seems like a great summer job and part-time work while going to school. It's social, you earn tips in addition to your hourly wage and being busy makes the time go by fast. That's what I thought I was signing up for at least, this past summer, when I got a job as a server. My experiences in the food and beverage industry motivated me to write this piece on restaurant culture and how it promotes the sexual harassment of female employees. To protect the identity of the restaurant I have decided to rename it Jay's. In this short article I want to paint a picture of the normalization of harassment, especially of young female employees in popular restaurants and highlight some resources for industry workers facing harassment on the job.

***“Bigger tits, bigger tips.”***



I started working at Jay's full time the day it opened. Being the only restaurant in the area that offered a lakeside dining experience it received great success and was very well received by the community. After dedicating five or more days a week to the restaurant I quickly started recognizing regulars and got to know loyal customers.

One group in particular would come in every weekend for a quick bite to eat and have to have a few drinks. They were usually a group of twelve men and two or three women in their late-teens-to-mid-twenties and would come in already mildly intoxicated. Those who we could legally serve would have two or three drinks, they would all eat, and then one person would settle the tab up at the end. The bills often ran up to six hundred dollars and they would leave a gratuity of roughly one hundred and fifty dollars. In order to show status or to 'look cool' I suppose, the person who would settle the tab always announced the total and the tip they left for the whole group to hear.



Throughout their meal, the boys in the group would make little comments about my outfit such as “You knew we were coming so you dressed up for us” or when I would place a plate down and say, “Pardon my reach” they would respond saying things like “I don’t mind, come closer”. Unfortunately, as a female in the industry you get used to comments like these and learn to ignore them.

### ***“I don’t mind, come closer.”***

On one occasion in particular, as the group was leaving one of the young men came over to me and reached his hand into the pocket of my apron to give me an additional fifty dollar bill. He winked and said, “You deserve it babe” and proceeded to walk away. It is important to note that our aprons were close to our bodies and the pockets of them often sat right above or at the groin. One of my male co-workers was shocked that someone would treat a woman that way when I told him about the incident. He explained that, as a male bartender, he was flirted with regularly but not to the extreme as the women at Jay’s were, and he never had someone physically touch him. When explaining the incident to one of my female colleagues she simply said, “Welcome to the club!” She supported me, but also shared countless stories of people making comments about her and getting “handsy”. After such routine transgressions she saw this as simply another day at work.

The restaurant industry has been built to allow sexual harassment. When an employee in the industry is serving alcohol the province of British Columbia has made it legal to pay below minimum wage as it is presumed that tips will make up the difference. In 2011 the minimum wage was, “\$10.25 per hour, while the minimum wage for liquor servers is \$9.00 per hour” (Matulewicz, 2015). Now, this may not seem like much to some but \$1.25 per hour adds up to ten dollars at the end of an eight hour shift; that’s roughly two hundred dollars that alcohol servers are losing each month. With gratuities becoming a large portion of your income servers and bartenders have to rely on customers to supplement their earnings. This often results in inappropriate behaviour being tolerated for fear that confronting

the individual on their misconduct will result in no tip at the end of their seating.

Additionally, “as customers contribute to the worker’s earnings, they become involved in the management of the employment relationship” (Matulewicz, 2015). Customers are afforded the power to decide how worthy their server is of a tip and how much it should be. They are putting a price on a person’s skill set, personality and often their appearance. With a minimum wage in the Province of BC that is insufficient for the cost of living, the culture of “working for tips” leaves servers between a rock and a hard place to stand up for their rights on the job.

Not only has the government made it so that front of house (FOH) staff relies on their tips but lots of establishments have a certain look that they seek in their staff, often with more demands targeted at women. Some people are judged on their appearance right from the interviewing process. Everyone knows this is illegal, and everyone knows it’s done. Some servers recount being, “hired on the basis of their attractiveness” (Giuffre & Williams, 1994) and notice they and their colleagues have a very similar look. In other businesses, “Employers might directly ask workers to present themselves in a particular “sexy” or “provocative” way that involves wearing short skirts and high-heeled shoes, showing cleavage, and wearing make-up to work” (Matulewicz, 2015) Note that these requirements are all targeted at female staff and these requests make it more likely that servers will receive unwelcome comments from customers. It so easily becomes the culture of not just any given restaurant, but of the industry.

### ***“You deserve it babe!”***

In the articles I read there were countless stories of women who felt they were subjected to unfair and inappropriate dress codes. One account is of a seventeen-year-old who was not even at the age of consent. She worked as a host at a restaurant and shared, “I was asked to have plunging necklines and short hems...And I was repeatedly asked to show off my boobs, which made me feel very uncomfortable” (Matulewicz, 2015). Ask anyone who works in table food service and they likely have a tale to tell of waitresses coerced to dress in particular ways to please customers sometimes even being “explicitly required

to adhere to a sexy dress code on the job” (Matulewicz, 2015) . Often areas like the bar or lounge require a more provocative dress code as that is where younger generations tend to crowd and the dining room areas, where people on a date or older generations may choose to sit it, the dress code is less strict. For example, when a group of men go watch a sports game they will sit at the bar or in the lounge where the more provocative dress code is recommended or required. The way someone dresses does not decide if you can or cannot make rude or inappropriate comments about them but, often when neck lines are lower, skirts are shorter, and alcohol flows more freely the comments become more frequent.

### ***“Burnout is very real.”***

Not only are women subject to sexualizing from customers but often bosses or managers will partake in similar behaviour. It is recorded, “58 percent of management and 75 percent of senior management positions” (Matulewicz, 2015) are held by men while, “80 percent of hosts/hostesses, bartenders, and food and beverage servers in Canada are women” (Matulewicz, 2015). Managers are often the ones who set dress codes and enforce them. With many restaurant workers viewing, “Sexual banter, “jokes,” touching, and flirtation” (Matulewicz, 2015) as embedded ‘parts of the job’ they become numb to the remarks made by colleagues. In a study conducted with a sample of eighteen people, “Three of the women and one of the men interviewed said they had been sexually harassed by their restaurants’ managers or owners” (Giuffre & Williams, 1994).

I worked in a restaurant where the FOH Manager would regularly drink on the job, which is not uncommon in the food and beverage industry. When he began to show signs of intoxication, he would make sexual comments towards other, usually female, staff members. like asking them to undress for him. He was at least ten years older than the youngest woman he made these comments to, and their boss: a clear abuse of power! From speaking with friends who also work FOH this is a common occurrence. When managers take part in the misconduct, they set a precedent that the behaviour is acceptable.

When acts like this occur, they are often tolerated in fear of being terminated or with hopes of receiving more or longer shifts. In the restaurant industry typically, you are provided with a start time, but your end time depends on how busy it is. Some days you may work eleven hours, others two hours and sometimes can be called off before your shift begins. When the person who decides when you stay or go has a liking for you, it is more likely that you can get the shifts that you would prefer.

It has been documented that, “waitresses working in sexually objectifying restaurants were at greater risk for experiencing burnout” (Szymanski & Mikorski, 2016). Burnout is very real, and I would dare say that most people have experienced it at some point in their life. In the restaurant industry it is quite common in peak season to work five or six days in a row for nine or more hours. Being in a “sexually objectifying” environment can further lead to servers feeling like they are, “[n]ot able to cope with the work demands placed on them, resulting in a loss of energy, fatigue, emotional depletion, and frustration” (Szymanski & Mikorski, 2016) With an industry that is known for its sexualizing of women or sayings such as ‘bigger tits, bigger tips’ society has started normalizing the disrespect of people in the food and beverage industry.

**FACT: IT WAS ONLY IN 2017 THAT BC LEGISLATURE PASSED A BILL PROHIBITING ESTABLISHMENTS FROM REQUIRING HIGH HEELS AS A MANDATORY PART OF DRESS CODE. THE COMMON SENSE TRUTH THAT “[T]HERE IS A RISK OF PHYSICAL INJURY FROM SLIPPING OR FALLING, AS WELL AS POSSIBLE DAMAGE TO THE FEET, LEGS AND BACK FROM PROLONGED WEARING OF HIGH HEELS WHILE AT WORK” HAD TO BE ARGUED IN COURT TO MAKE THIS CHANGE POSSIBLE (LARSEN, 2017)!**



age industry. The toxic environment is diminishing and lets customers determine how much money a server is worth.

I believe that workers should have the right to wear what they feel comfortable in at work. Understanding, loungewear is not acceptable, as in most workplaces (at least before the pandemic), but if a male server can wear a turtle neck and trousers to work, and still be tipped decently, why can't a woman?

I think it would be beneficial to have a customer service industry or food and beverage industry helpline. I understand that workers' right tribunals exist but having a place for food and beverage personnel to talk about an experience they had at work or to file an anonymous complaint for investigation could be very beneficial. You cannot ask your boss for help when your concern is with your boss. Additionally, some of the instances of sexual harassment people face at work do not register until they are sitting at home after a long day. By having a help line, the emotions rushing in could be addressed in the moment and appropriate resources could be recommended.

If these changes are implemented it will still take years to see change in an industry as damaged as food and beverage. Women are facing insane levels of misconduct that is perpetuated by government laws and tolerated behaviour. It is time that respect for women is taken off of the 86 list. When looking for resources to support people experiencing workplace harassment in British Columbia it became very evident that there are very few local options. Listed below are a few resources that can support people through workplace harassment and bullying. I have also included a link to Ben's Friends; a hospitality based substance abuse support network as substance abuse is a common coping mechanism for people in the food and beverage industry.

Working in the hospitality industry and need some support?

If you have experienced sexual assault: <https://hswc.ca/womens-crisis-support/>



If you are experiencing bullying in the workplace:  
<https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/bullying.html>

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# WOMEN IN HEAVY METAL: A CIVIL WAR

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by Jaydyn Baillie

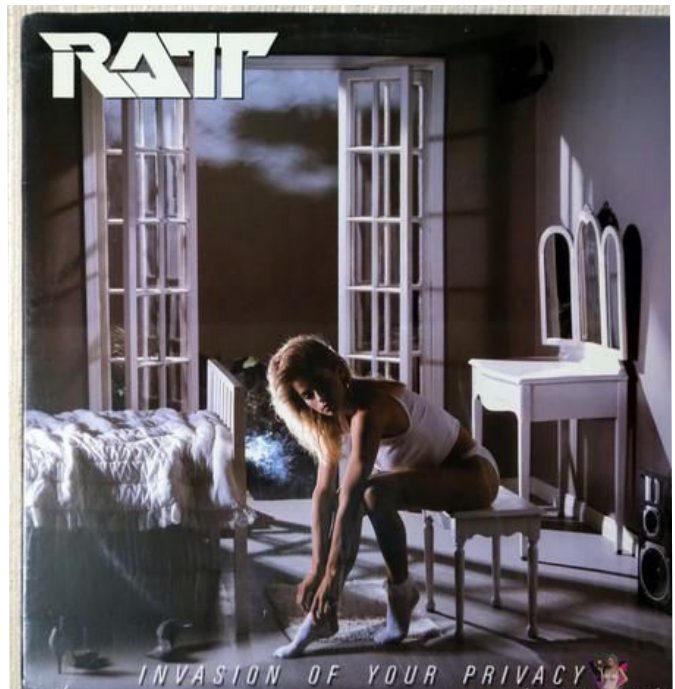
I developed my love for heavy metal honestly. While my friends were raised on rock music like The Doors, or pop music like George Michael, my home life was soundtracked by bands like Judas Priest, Metallica, and Alice in Chains. Road trips weren't complete without a little car karaoke to Iron Maiden. As I got into my early teens, my love for heavy metal never died, but it did change. I found my own sound, and it was darker and heavier than anything I had been exposed to on those ferry rides to see my grandmother. I explored deep into black and goth metal, which still remain my favourite genres to this day.

My dad would tell stories about metal shows in the 80's and 90's and I always expected the same kind of excitement for myself once I was old enough to go. What I discovered, unfortunately, is that his experience only existed for men. My experience was that of constant discomfort. I learned very early that many men were unwelcoming to women. Perhaps this was due to many reasons, but I think mainly they refused to believe that women could actually like heavy music. We must be there for the men, right?

I spent all of my time reading into heavy metal and it did not take long to discover that almost every other woman who liked this music had similar experiences to mine. The judgement, the sneering, and the impromptu quizzes to "prove" that I didn't really listen to the band on my shirt. These experiences appeared to be universal for female metalheads. There was something that always eluded me, however, and that was the question; why? Why do women in heavy metal experience such backlash for simply being women? Is it a reflection of the greater world or is it something deep seated in metalhead culture?

## Lyrics and Imagery

Since the inception of heavy metal in the late 1960's, it has always been constructed as a boy's club. The early bands that rose to prominence consisting solely of men and generally wrote songs that catered to stereotypical male preferences such as war and personal conflict. This era was not too bad, women were not explicitly looked down upon, they were just forgotten. The lyrics that did reference women mostly referenced witches, faeries, and other mythical figures, not the average woman. This carried on, albeit ramping up slowly, until it hit a major turning point in the 1980's. Metal had now become a showcase of hyper-masculine imagery.



Ratt, "Invasion Of Your Privacy" (1985). Taken from Pinterest.com

A litany of bands whose members were big, strong, white men clad in leather and studs writing songs about needlessly aggressive behaviour, hardcore partying, and mistreating women. Examples of these lyrics include:



“It’s So Easy” by Guns n Roses

“Turn around bitch I got a use for you/ Besides you ain’t got nothin’ better to do/ And I’m bored.”

“All In The Name Of...” by Motley Crue

“She’s only fifteen/ She’s the reason — the reason that I can’t sleep/ You say illegal/ I say legal’s never been my scene.”

With the development of faster and heavier subgenres came with it more demeaning and downright violent lyrical portrayals of women. Death metal is one of the metal’s worst offenders, often referencing rape, murder, and defilement of women. Men occasionally were victims in songs as well, but they make up an underwhelming minority. Women were not just written this way, the album art reinforced it. Women were mainly shown in three ways, alluring and underdressed, as shown on the cover of Ratt’s “Invasion Of Your Privacy” (1985), naked damsels in distress, as seen on the cover for Manowar’s “Gods of War” (2007), or being brutalized, as exemplified on the front of Cannibal Corpse’s “Butchered at Birth” (1991). What is rarely seen throughout all subgenres of metal is a woman being shown as a man’s equal. They are always depicted as sexy, victims, or sexy victims.



Cannibal Corpse, “Butchered at Birth” (1991). Taken from Wikipedia.org

### Pop Quiz!

A massive part of being a heavy metal fan is being knowledgeable in your heavy metal trivia. This is expected of a metal fan of any gender, but, as stated in Angela Dyck’s piece entitled “Without Judgment: A Preliminary Exploration of Heavy Metal Stereotypes,” “as a female in Heavy Metal you are expected to “know your shit” better than the average male” (Dyck, 2012, 9). Women are rarely seen as fans immediately, they are more often seen as some guy’s girlfriend or a groupie. When a woman states that she is, in fact, a fan of heavy metal, she can be met with a multitude of questions. This is done to prove that the woman is actually a “poser” and not a true fan.

This is exemplified by a woman named Matilda interviewed by Susanna Nordström and Marcus Herz’s for their article, “It’s a matter of eating or be eaten’ Gender positioning and difference making in the heavy metal subculture.” Matilda states, “You need to be stronger and show that you are knowledgeable about the music, more as a girl than as a boy. I had to go through interrogations” (Nordström & Herz, 2013, 459). Once a woman can prove her worth as a fan, male metalheads tend to view the woman as



Manowar, “Gods of War” (2007). Taken from Wikipedia.org

someone to be respected, not criticized. A respondent in “Women Doing Gender in Heavy Metal: Between Sexism and Feminism” by Anna S. Rogers and Mathieu Deflem stated that “for a man to be accepted... [he would] probably only need to show up in a black t-shirt and [have] rudimentary knowledge of the band’s music” (Rogers & Deflem, 2019, 9). Many men who took part in the interviews said that they only really felt out of place is when they were wearing clothing that did not match the “uniform” (i.e., black t-shirt and jeans).

### The Uniform

Fans of heavy metal are known for their love of black clothing, but the specific items a person wears can mean a lot more. Metal is dominated by all male band members, and like anything else, those who are most popular dictate the styles. The aggressive masculine style of many of the bands is mirrored in generally masculine dress of the fans. Fashion can often be another hurdle for women who enjoy presenting femininely, resulting in some women feeling the need to masculinize themselves in order to fit in.

There is another option for women to be accepted in looks, but it damages their chances of being taken seriously as a fan, and that is to dress like the women often portrayed in the fantasy of heavy metal. High-heels and corsets, all in black of course, can often give off the impression of a woman being a “metal chick,” but many find it harder to be taken seriously dressed like this, and will resort to the more masculine look. It seems there is no way to be simultaneously feminine and metal as a subject, only a fetishised object.

### What About the Female Artists?

Female artists in metal are not immune to the struggles to be taken seriously, especially in the age of social media. Due to female artists generally gravitating to more exaggerated looks when performing, many get hate for being nothing more than a pretty face or trying too hard. In 2016, Amalie Bruun, also known as Myrkur, had to disable her Facebook page because she was getting inundated with death threats from male metalheads because she dared to make metal



Amalie Bruun (2020). Taken from: [loudersound.com](https://loudersound.com)  
music as a woman.

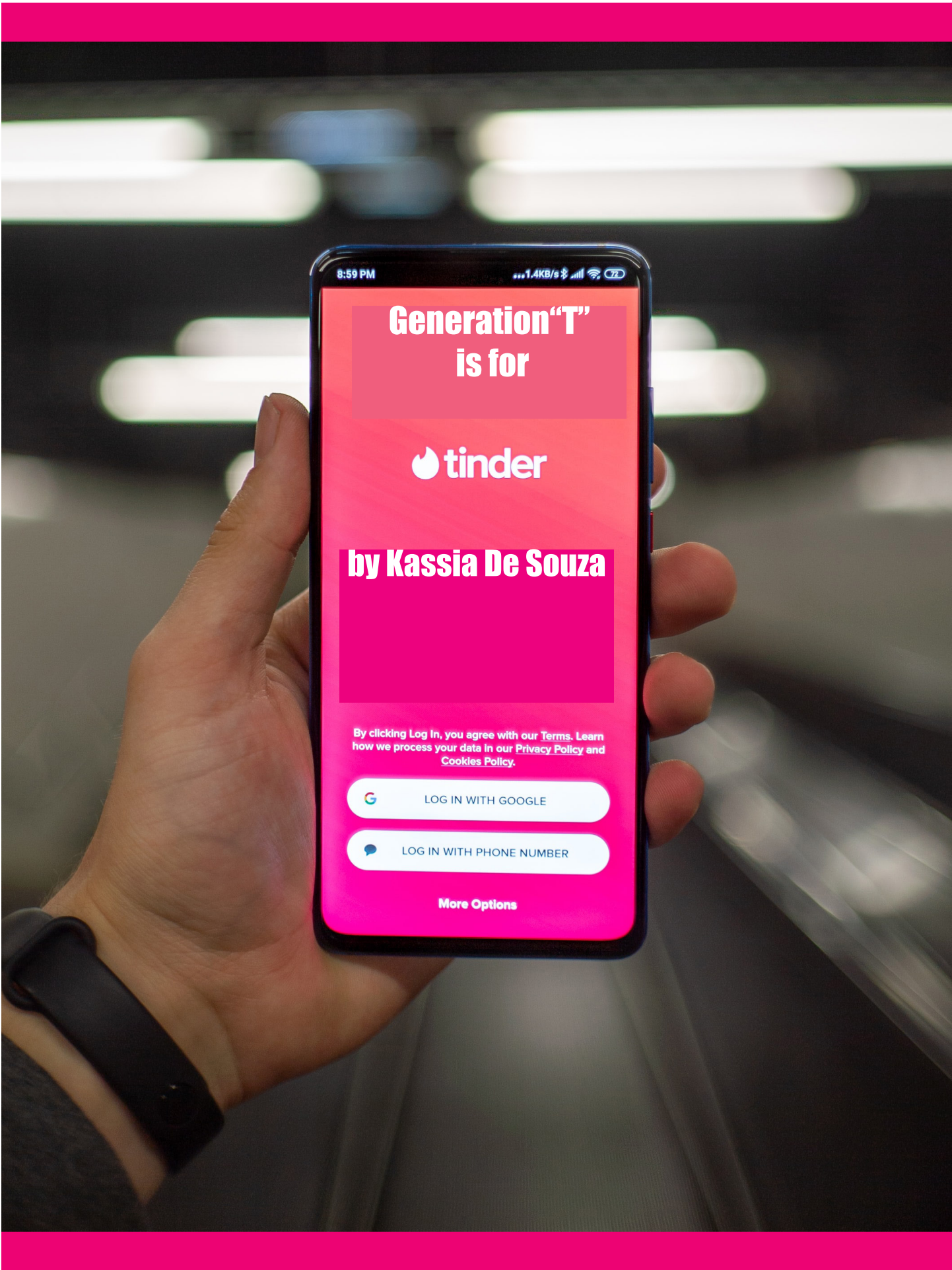
Female metal artists are trolled so much that the front women of bands Svalbard and Ithaca wrote an entire article responding to the most common hate comments they receive. Some of these comments include, “Without exception, every female fronted metal band is shit” and “When there’s a lead female vocalist in a metal band, the music is all watered down/generic. It’s all for image. Hot chick frontman = \$\$\$” (Cherry & Azzouz, 2019). In recent years, heavy metal news outlets have opened up on the presence of sexism in the genre, especially after the amount of hate Myrkur received. While this seems great, the cesspool of misogyny in the comment sections of almost every article shows that things are not getting better, in fact they may be getting worse.

### The Future of Women in Metal

While metal has a storied history of sexism, women are beginning to fight back. There has been an influx of bands, who are fronted by women, writing songs about their experiences facing the misogyny of the genre and what they would like to see changed. Unfortunately, this appears to be doing very little for the time being. In a music sub-culture where “feminism” is a dirty word, it is virtually impossible to honestly acknowledge this persisting problem. What we can do now is to individually call out misogyny when we see it, support our favourite bands containing women, and hope that the genre we love can find it in itself to change for the better.

\*Note this piece has been edited down from a longer paper.





# Generation T, is for Tinder

By Kassia DeSouza

As a young woman growing up in the 2000's, a few things are for sure: I fully believe I am a "90's kid"; I had a killer peek-a-poo collection, and social media basically raised me. From Facebook in grade five to an iPhone in grade eight, it was hard to tear myself away. Now add into the equation a boy-crazy sixteen-year-old girl with a smartphone and this magical new 'dating' app called "Tinder". I have to admit: I loved this app! As an admittedly awkward, attention-hungry, grade ten girl who had just transferred schools, this was like the holy grail. Bored? Tinder. Lonely? Tinder. Christmas Day? Tinder. It didn't matter. Where there was WIFI there were matches to be made. I wish I was exaggerating, but sadly, I'm not. I was obsessed. Back then I didn't see anything wrong with it. It was "normal". In hindsight tinder ruined relationships for me. I know that sounds dramatic, and many people will say that I'm "too young" to know it ruined relationships for me, but trust me, my issues are piled high and it's because of online dating.

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My family life is pretty good, both my parents were always around. There was nothing out of the ordinary. My parents are happily married; I am the eldest of 4 children: I have 2 sisters and a brother. My family is good, happy, and are not the reason for my development of trust and intimacy issues in relationships. I searched and searched, questioning why I couldn't let myself form relationships, asking why I hated commitment and why I constantly sabotaged myself. Finally, it hit me. It was the exposure to online dating apps at such a young age and pivotal stage in my development! My self-worth was determined by how many people swiped right on me, how many likes I received on a photo, and if boys gave me attention.

**"Bored? Tinder. Lonely? Tinder. Christmas Day? Tinder. It didn't matter. Where there was WIFI there were matches to be made."**

Social expectations of men's behaviors are vastly different from social demands made of women. Men are applauded for their "conquests". The higher the number, the more respect a young man gets for being "a lady-killer". On the other hand, women are not allowed to be promiscuous, and if you are you will be labelled a "slut." Even as the society progresses towards more equitable expectations, people still seem to hang on to the gendered assumptions of who can openly have sex, and who cannot. The term "loose" is often used to refer to girls who have sex with more than one partner or who have sex outside of a relationship: yet what is really the difference between having sex with one man 15 times and having sex with 15 men one time if you and your partners are using appropriate protection and are consenting participants? The way that society reacts to sexually active women needs to change!

I learned what the word "promiscuous" meant when I was in grade eight, my best friends' mom told her she wasn't allowed



to hang out with me anymore because the clothes I wore were too “promiscuous”. I was fourteen with C-cups and still trying to ignore the fact that I grew breasts overnight. To my friends’ mom my V-neck graphic-t was just “too much cleavage” and it meant I could only be a bad influence or bring unsavory attention. That same year, on a hot mid-June day, my grade eight teacher asked me how I expected to be taken seriously if I dressed like I was on a street corner. I was wearing jean shorts and a tank top. He acted as if I was wearing thigh high boots and a bando to class! I knew what it was like to be “slut shamed” simply for having a well-developed woman’s body at fourteen and honestly, it only got worse later on.

In grade ten was when I decided to get Tinder. It was great, at first. Just going on seeing how many matches I could get and ignoring their messages gave an easy boost to my self-esteem. Next thing you know you are messaging back, meeting up, and discovering that “u wanna hang out” does not mean you are going on a date, and “Netflix and chill” does not mean a date to watch a show together. Nonetheless, seeking validation of my appearance and desirability was just too easy with the app. Officially you have to be 18 to use Tinder, but there was no real barrier to me using the app. I’ll be honest, there rush from doing something I knew I shouldn’t be doing added to the excitement. Some kids did lots of drugs or shoplifted. I met up with guys I didn’t know who told me I was beautiful and sexy and who didn’t ask too many questions about my age.

**“I began to believe that if someone likes you, they will want to have sex with you.”**

I am not saying I am faultless in my, for lack of a better word, ‘addiction’ to online dating apps. I fully consented to make an account and use it regularly. However, my biggest concern here is that because of how young I was exposed to casual hook ups I think I stunted my emotional development. I began to believe that if someone likes you, they will want to have sex with you. Not talk to you, or do activities with you, just sex. I assumed that if a man didn’t ask to see you naked, he wasn’t really interested. What I didn’t know was it is the opposite. If a man wants to see you fully clothed in the middle of the day then yes! he does like you, if not: you’re expendable. The sad part is, I wanted to find somebody who I could date, but because I had conditioned myself into believing sex is how

you win over guys, it didn’t happen for me then.

As far as I can tell there are five ways to meet people. First, pure luck; second, introduction through a friend; third, work; fourth, school; fifth, dating apps. Obviously, the easiest way for most people is the use of apps and sites. You don’t need to risk seeing that person all the time at work or school if it doesn’t work out or jeopardize your friendships in any way. Hell, you don’t even need to leave the house or even, put pants on! Unfortunately, these apps tend to feed into our consumerist social norms. The sheer number of people who are available make it hard to stay focused on just one person. There will always be a new and improved version of the one that came before, how can anyone learn how to say enough is enough?

**“Young men and women need to be taught that embracing sexuality is okay as long as it is also mutually respectful and consensual.”**

The saying “why buy the cow when you can get the milk for free” becomes more relevant than I thought it could. Why would you settle down, when there are so many other interesting new people out there to talk to for two weeks and then move on from.

“Tinder clocks 1.4 billion swipes per day”, that’s how many cards have been swiped either right or left, yes or no (Lefebvre). It takes less than a minute to decide whether you want to initiate contact with that person or not. Yet so many people base their entire self-perception on it. It’s unhealthy. Rejection on dating apps can have a huge impact on self-esteem. Since dating apps are largely photo-based, it is easy to experience a blow to your ego when you get unmatched or ghosted (when the person you are talking to doesn’t reply). “Being turned down stimulates the same part of the brain that processes physical pain, according to a 2011 study from the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences” (Marateck).

Imagine that rather than one in-person rejection a person can experience dozens in a single night. This is obviously not good for user’s mental health. By experiencing this constant stream rejection and/or praise based on appearance

it is inevitably going to not only create an extremely narcissistic society but a severe problem of self-worth. Although, it is also possible for results to go in the opposite direction. Constantly being praised for how “attractive” others find you can severely saturate the ego, making you believe you are untouchable and to behave arrogantly. Either way, it is an extremely unhealthy view of self and can cause many emotional problems in the future.

I would argue that these apps don’t just allow for more shallow interactions, but they also create a shallower society, which is the opposite way we should be going. Although it would be ideal to return to a world of romantic dates and getting to know one another slowly, this is not the direction society is headed. According to Jenna Birch, an author in *Psychology Today*, short-term relationships are now the norm, long-term relationships are too much of a commitment for people. Dating apps change how quickly middle school and high schoolers grow up. The constant need for attention and peer acceptance is damaging for self-image, with Instagram and social media in general it is already hard enough for youth to develop a healthy self-image.

Unfortunately, it is unlikely that people will realize quite how online dating is changing them and cultivating destructive habits of attention until the damage is already done. The fact is online dating is far too convenient and attractive to those without the time, courage or span of attention to meet people the old fashioned way. Our increasingly work-centred lives make Tinder an easy (and geographically versatile) choice for most. Rather than completely discrediting apps such as Tinder, it is more important to educate youth in the proper usage and why it might be a good idea to wait until eighteen to use the app. Young men and women need to be taught that embracing sexuality is okay as long as it is also mutually respectful and consensual. There must be a way to combine the convenience of online dating with the much-needed passion for romance our great-grandparents and grandparents once had. Right?

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# Disabilities Through the Lens of Reproductive Justice

## What is Reproductive Justice?

"The human right to maintain personal bodily autonomy, have children, not have children, and parent the children we have in safe and sustainable communities."

It is also...

- A basic human right
- About access, not choice
- More than abortion
- A term coined by black women

## What is a disability?

A disability is something that interferes with, impairs or limits certain activities, tasks and interactions within an individuals life.



### Cognitive

- Learning disabilities
- Attention disorders
- Memory problems
- Developmental delays



### Physical

- Nerve injury
- Paralysis
- Muscular and joint conditions
- Respiratory disorders
- Epilepsy



### Visual

- Colour blindness
- Low vision
- Eyesight loss
- Blindness



### Auditory

- Hearing loss
- Hard of hearing

In no way is this list meant to offend anyone, some people may define a disability differently. I do acknowledge that every disability is different and every individual is unique in their own way. This topic is an ongoing learning experience and if something is offensive or incorrect this was not my intention, I simply ask to be taught what I can say/do to make things right.

by Isabelle Hochban

## How are people with disabilities seen within reproductive and sexual health?



Oftentimes disabled individuals are put into a homogenous group when in fact they are all sexual beings who require appropriate sexual and reproductive care.



Because the female body is often represented as a normative standard many disabled individuals are caught between the visibility of their differing bodies and the invisibility of their selves and needs as women.



Different disabilities require different care whether it be different formats to deliver information or making clinics, hospitals and medical equipment more accessible to those with physical impairments.



The reproductive abilities of disabled women has also been tightly controlled through sterilization and institutionalization. Oftentimes they are presumed to be asexual beings with no desires or sexual needs and with that they are not seen as in need of information regarding birth control, sexuality and reproduction.



Doctors can also influence an individual's choice whether or not to carry on with a pregnancy in fear that the baby will possibly inherit the parent's disability. This can have damaging effects on someone's self-worth, and further emphasizes the idea that not all bodies should reproduce.



# Sexual and reproductive health

People with disabilities often experience challenges when it comes to accessing sexual and reproductive health services

People with disabilities are often seen as non-sexual and excluded from being able to bear a child. This couldn't be further from the truth, as like everyone, they have needs and desires when it comes to sex and reproduction. Because of this, many reproductive and sexual health services are simply ignored or neglected.

Some individuals with physical disabilities cannot use machines within clinics, hospitals and health care centers. This could be because they are unable to stand or they face difficulties laying or sitting on higher beds and tables. Not all healthcare services have been adapted to accommodate everyone, including people with physical disabilities.

The social determinants of health have reinforced the idea that certain bodies should not reproduce.

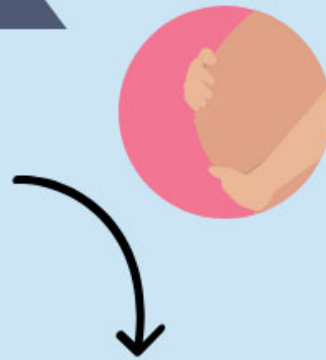


Having access to equipment and machines that fit the needs of people with physical disabilities is necessary in order to ensure that everyone has access to health and reproductive health care services



# Moving forward...

People with uteruses who also have a disability or multiple disabilities, continue to face oppression in terms of sexual and reproductive health. People with disabilities are seen as unable to conceive, give birth, menstruate or have intimate relationships, because of this it is thought that they do not require sexual health services or information regarding sex, contraception and reproduction.



Although there may not be any obvious forms of discrimination towards people with disabilities regarding sexual and reproductive health, there are still many barriers and obstacles that make sexual autonomy difficult.

Moving forward, it is important to recognize that sex and reproduction are an important part of personal identity, mental health and overall wellbeing. People with and without uteruses who have disabilities should be free to express and practice their own sexuality. They should also be free to make their own decisions regarding their bodies, have access to the necessary health services and information and be able to have or not have children in a safe environment free of discrimination.



Interested in thinking more about Gender, Sexualities and Women's Studies (GSWS)?

## SUMMER 2021

GSWS 1101: Contemporary Issues in GSWS (Weds/Fri) 10am-12pm, Sarah Paynter (Geography)

PSYCH 3120: Gender Relations (Thurs) 8:30-11:20am, Teresa Howell (Psychology)

## FALL 2021

GSWS 1100: Introduction to Feminisms: Silences, Voices, Experiences

Instructors: Trish Matson (English), Ivanna Cikes (English)

GSWS 1101: Contemporary Issues in GSWS, Sally Mennill (History)

GSWS 1102: Intro to Contemp Issues in Sexuality Studies, Kira Tomson (Philosophy)

GSWS 2101: Gender Today: Exploring Gender in Contemporary Contexts, Jill Fellows (Philosophy)

PHIL 2360: Philosophy and Feminist Thought, Jill Fellows, (Philosophy)

HIST 2260: Women, Gender, and Sexuality in Canada, 1600-1870, Sally Mennill (History)

SOCI 2240: Women in Society, Lisa Smith, (Sociology)

SOCI 2250: Families and Social Change, Marnie Westerman (Sociology)