

Manifestos, Declarations, and Statements

Robin Mitchell, Ph.D.

The manifesto is the genre of the broken promise.
Janet Lyon

In the spring and fall of 2010, I taught a women's and gender studies undergraduate Introduction to Feminist Theory course at SUNY College at Oneonta, entitled, *Manifestos, Declarations and Statements*. My objective was to have the students understand the connections between feminist theory and practice, and to see how the genre of the manifesto, declaration or statement could be used to facilitate that project. I believed that the manifesto offered itself up as a potent form for feminist analysis, a modern genre *par excellence*, a methodology of the oppressed, and a generative "marriage" of theory and practice. I wanted to help my students see that if, as bell hooks has written, feminist theory is a "liberatory practice," that writing a feminist tract of their own could be a revelatory one.¹

I began with Janet Lyon's work *Manifestos: Provocations of the Modern*, which laid out the history, theory, and basic tenants of the manifesto. While Lyon's believes that the manifesto can "teach us about the problems of modernity," it also has wider implications.² She asserts a manifesto must "disregard good manners and reasoned civility." That is must speak in a declarative, passionate voice and demand, not ask, for immediate change. That it must "give the appearance of being at once both word and deed, both threat and incipient action."³ As one manifesto advocating suffrage warned: The time for argument is past! The time for action is come.⁴ Finally, that "to write a manifesto is to announce one's participation, however discursive, in a history of struggle against dominant factors."⁵ And it is to "link one's voice to the countless voices of previous perpetual struggle."⁶

There are dangers, of course, in a project such as this one. There are always dangers. One is the collective "we." For in writing the declaration or manifesto, one must invoke the collective "we" even as it disavows the collective "we". Because the use of "we" risks disempowering at the same time it seeks to empower,⁷ articulations of feminist theory—just like formations of gendered subjectivity—are neither natural nor inevitable. As feminists and allies of feminism, we understand those slippages, even if we are not always able to transcend them.

So it with these lessons (and concerns) that students in the introduction to feminist theory read dozens of manifestos, declarations and statements of all subject matter:⁸ "The Bitch Manifesto," to the "Declaration of Independence." From the "SCUM Manifesto" to the "Declaration of Sentiments." From "Fat Liberation" to the "Statement of Transsexual Rights," from the "Combahee River Collective" to "Third World Gay Revolution: 'What We Want, What We Believe,' " and believe me, everything in between. They pondered, they argued, they

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commiserated. Then they took pen to paper, and wrote their own. Then they signed their names and posted them on the walls of SUNY College at Oneonta.

When given the opportunity to post them anonymously, all of the students wanted their full names on their work. And I was really surprised at how many of the students said that the manifesto gave them the opportunity to face issues that had been with them for a long time. I am incredibly moved at their courage and privileged to have been their professor. They took a stand about something they believed in. What else as educators can we ask of them?

The works were ultimately displayed in a library exhibit, entitled "What Do You Stand For? SUNY Oneonta Feminists Writing Manifestos for the 21st Century," which premiered on September 1, 2010 to a record breaking and enthusiastic crowd.⁹

Others read them. And some were not happy about what they read. The Comments book revealed their anger. Others thought they were powerful. Some just wrote "thanks." Whatever their reactions, they read what these young women (and man!) wrote. And write they did: their own manifestos ranged from the *Anti-Bitch Manifesto*, which asked if language used against women can ever be recuperated and ultimately decided "No". Another, who demanded we take back the word "cunt" because we are stronger than the words meant to demean us. One manifesto *Anything You Can Do I Can Do Better* showed us how attacks on our sexuality can no longer be used to retard female strength. That, our sexuality – whatever it is – cannot be used to divide us. *Wanna Hear a Joke? Women's Rights*, forced us to see the devastation of violence against women as a crime against all of us. The remainder of the topics range from the writer declaring herself free from the pressure of religion to determine her own worth, to railing against the wearing of offensive, women hating fraternity tee-shirts in class that are demeaning to women. Some are amusing, such as the *Single Girl Manifesto*. There are also tragic cries about rape. Finally, like the *Disability Manifesto*, they are hopeful.

Read what they have to say. And then ask yourselves: What Do You Stand For?¹⁰

End Notes

1. bell hooks, "Feminism: Theory As Liberatory Practice," *Yale Journal of Law and Feminism*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Fall 1991): 1-12 and 14.
2. Janet Lyon, *Manifestos: Provocations of the Modern* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1999), 3. Lyon, 14.
4. From 1909 suffragette manifesto, as quote in Lyon, 28.
5. *Ibid.*, 10.
6. *Ibid.*, 29.
7. Lyon discusses the "collective we" in depth throughout the text; see, for example, Lyon, 25, 126, and 198.
8. This was supplemented with feminist writings that asked questions about theory, such as: How does the subject hailed by the manifesto resemble or look differently than the modal modern subject? How did women of color – so often initially excluded from traditional forms of written decrees – circumvent their circumstances and fundamentally contribute to, and alter the genre? Who was

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included and excluded from these collectives? How do subsequent manifestoes negotiate these omissions (or fail to)?

9. The students also presented their works at the biennial "Seneca Falls Dialogues" conference in Seneca Falls, New York in October of 2010.

10. The students and I wish to thank Pamela Flinton and Kay Benjamin, SUNY College at Oneonta, Milne Library; the Teaching, Learning, & Technology Center; Colleen Brannan, President's Office; Robb Thibault, Director of the Hunt College Union; Bill Harclerode, Director of Campus Activities; and Susan Bernardin, Chair, and Nancy Sacco, the Department of Women's and Gender Studies. Our special thanks to Diana L. Moseman, M.S., Instructional Design Technician, for the amazing exhibition artwork.

**Bodies of W.A.R.
(Women Against Rape) Manifesto
Amanda Bohorquez - Class of 2012**

For the people at war with themselves. For the people who are victims of violence against their bodies. For the people who have been violated, forced and hurt. For the people who feel oppressed by their shame imposing peers. For the girl left in someone's bedroom comforted by nothing, not even her tears. She was left there after being raped, violated, forced and hurt. This is for her. This is for me. This is for every one who believes we are at war and we did not start it, we did not ask for it, we do not condone it, but hell if we are part of it we will fight! We WILL fight, fight as Bodies of W.A.R. (Women Against Rape).

Rape is used as a tool of oppression against the fight for the equality of women. Rape is not just used by the soldier at war abroad or committed by the monster hiding in the bushes. Rape is a war tactic we are forced to be victimized by on our homeland and those who utilize this tactic are given slaps on the wrists, if any punishment at all. They walk amongst us in our homes, they take our daughters out on dates, they put our children to sleep, they sell us our groceries, they teach in our schools, they preach at our churches and they let us fall in love them. The war we are fighting is of the domestic kind and until we realized that we can be raped anywhere at anytime because our government deems it safe for rapists to roam our streets, this war will never end and we will never cease to be accused of its beginning. We are raped and then told it is our fault. We are violated and are told that we condoned it. For those of you who believe it is ever a woman's fault if she is raped I want you to go home and have someone pin you down, cover your mouth and violate you so you may see that rape rips things and breaks things inside of you that you didn't even know you had. So for all of you who claim women are temptresses and we deserve what we get, fuck you! This is not for you. This is for the Bodies of W.A.R. and for these bodies I propose the following changes:

- (1) We will admit that we are at war on home turf and that no one is safe until it is over.
- (2) We will recognize each other not as victims, but as warriors and survivors of the War Against the Equality of Human Beings as we are the Bodies of Women Against Rape.
- (3) We will punish those who wish to harm, have harmed and believe it is ok to harm us. They are undeserving of the freedom they are given and I suggest the following punishment: Life in a prison solely containing the vile perpetrators of rape; as well as those granting it upon us. They will suffer amongst themselves and rot in a hell created all on their own because THEY asked for it.
- (4) We will grant privacy to those unwilling to share their stories. The same way soldiers do not tell their tales of war from fear of reliving them, we should not be poked and prodded over the fascination civilians have with the graphics of our experiences.
- (5) We will demand and receive protection by the authorities from rapists on trial. I propose that the accused are held in jail with no option of bail.
- (6) We will prosecute any community member who imposes shame upon the warriors and survivors of this war as they are deserving of the same punishment given to rapists. They fuel the fight for a rapist's freedom and make it okay for rapists to harm again.
- (7) We will acknowledge that Bodies of Women Against Rape is a movement open for all to join whether warrior, civilian or any sex/gender as long as they believe that the survivors of this war should not be labeled as whores, temptresses, fags or any other word that accuses survivors of asking to be raped.
- (8) We will acknowledge that rape is not about sexuality, but about power. Rapists feel powerful by committing a crime that makes us feel powerless. We are not powerless. We are warriors in the War Against the Equality of Human Beings.
- (9) We will acknowledge that rape is never the survivors fault, no matter their appearance, class, race, gender, sex, creed, age or choice of lifestyle.

The changes listed above will be enforced by the Bodies of W.A.R. Without these changes women will continue to be forced into submission and never be considered equals. Without these changes survivors of rape will be violated over and over by the people who blame them for the crimes that were committed against them. Without these changes we will never come to see that Rape is War and if we want equality we must FIGHT!

Layout/Design: Diana L. Mosman - SUNY Oneonta

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GET OFF YOUR MORAL HIGH HORSE!
Julie Close - Class of 2010

For too long the ideologies behind female stripping have consisted of the assumptions, such as it is their desired profession, their bodies are the sole representation of their worth, and they lack the skills to perform in any other setting. We as feminists use the same language of oppression that has been heaped upon women for centuries. It is time as feminists we get off of our moral high horses and aid these women in the realization that they have a choice. We must provide other outlets and detach the stigma from the profession.

Let me begin by posing the question, "What is a job?" If one woman goes to work and sits in a cubicle all day and another dances behind a glass casing, or on top of a stage, and both bring in an income, are they both not considered to be part of the working class? What validates a profession? Exotic dancing is not an illegal profession; for many, it is providing the necessary means for a woman to put a roof over her head, food on the table, and clothes on her back. (Had she no income, she would not have clothes to take off in the first place.)

Due to the nudity and the non-talking aspect of their position, female strippers have morphed from ordinary women into some kind of objectified ideal of sexuality. This objectification comes from somewhere. Institutions such as patriarchy further amplify the stereotypes and attitudes these women must deal with. The men in these establishments forget that they are seeing real women; stripping is for their entertainment purposes only. Due to the lack of clothes, they are able to rationalize the demeaning of the female form. These men often lack the capacity to see past the pair of tits in front of them. Yes, there are women who have the innate desire to show off their bodies. These strippers consider their daily work as a form of expression; an art form that allows them to put their beloved bodies on display. For these women their bodies are picturesque and should be shared rather than concealed. To them the female form is not to be covered; they achieve pleasure in performing nude for others to see. Their rationale can consist of the idea that because their clientele are not permitted to touch them they see no harm in being gazed upon. We must permit these women to continue in their pursuit for happiness, if this is their choice. We need to break out of our habitual knee-jerk reactions and appreciate their talents and courage. Their ability to continue in this profession un-judged and safe shall be utilized as inspiration for women, who instead of fulfilling their own desires, live in fear.

Yet there is a deeper side, women who have known no other lifestyle, and therefore are forced into these positions to maintain the bare minimum requirements of life. These women are often coerced into such arrangements with the belief that their lives will improve. The economic standards of our society have forced these women into a lifetime of travesty and made them objects of ridicule. These women are constantly bombarded with messages that depict them as worthless and uneducated. After the incessant assurance that she is not worthy or qualified to perform any other task, it is only a matter of time before she enters into the same mindset. The issue of being terminated by the clubs they work in after a year due to the need for 'variety' leads these women into a life of constant mobilization, and the inability to settle. This inconsistency creates an unstable environment, especially for mothers. In an industry which considers its employees disposable, the impossibility of receiving any form of benefits is preposterous. It is time we give these women back their voice, and instead of disregarding, mocking, or neglecting them, we will listen. And then we raise our voices alongside them!

We need to stop picking and choosing which aspects of the female agency to protect and which aspects can simply be ignored due to a profession we may not approve of.

We cannot sit by and allow any women to be treated as worthless pieces of meat.

We must treat strippers with the same respect, dignity, and honor as the so-called "ordinary" woman next to us. We need to stop pointing fingers and applying stereotypes.

The name calling, "whore" and "slut" stop now! These words only further enable the degrading of all women. We as women must unite and take a stand for our fellow sisters, mothers, friends, and lovers; if we do, a profound impact will be made on the perpetuation of the female form as merely a sexualized object.

So, we need to get off our MORAL high horses and aid those who have the aspiration to go down another path; while commanding those who are satisfied where they are. As a replacement for saying let's 'try growing a pair of balls' – because men are NOT the only sex who can be stern, assertive, and strong in their beliefs – let's say, 'try opening up your eyes/mind' to the oppression these women face every day. Instead of further degrading them, let's help further their well-being as people. Discrimination is discrimination, whether it's the result of the color of your skin or the showing off of your skin.

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**Want to hear a joke?
Women's Rights
Rebekah Cramer - Class of 2013**

I can't tell you how many times I've heard horribly tacky and inconceivably disrespectful jokes towards women. Like, "What do you tell a woman with two black eyes? Nothin, you done told her twice." Or how about, "What's strong enough for a man, but made for a woman? The back of his hand." And one of my all time favorites, "How can you tell if your wife is dead? The sex is the same, but the dishes pile up." That last one was hilarious, wasn't it? Actually not to me. When I refuse to laugh, I am told that they don't actually believe what they're saying, it's just a joke and I need a sense of humor. I'm more than positive that I'm not the only one who's ever been put in this type of situation either. To laugh at the mockery of battery and abuse is not something I would ever condone. It's not humorous, it's malicious. It's not amusing, it's ignorant. Women are raped, stolen, and brutally murdered everyday while instead of joining to stop these atrocities these people are making cracks about how females belong in the kitchen. Clearly they've got their priorities straight.

Recently a friend of mine made the comment that feminist theory and feminism in general is irrelevant to the twenty-first century woman. In her words, "Why are we still talking about these things? Didn't all of that stuff happen in the 60's?" After hearing the jokes I'd say definitely not, but it is a privilege of hers to not be exposed to the daily traumas which many modern women face. It is then my own responsibility to be aware of these occurrences and therefore my moral obligation to educate the unaware. This manifesto will inform her, along with others, as to why feminism is still pertinent to women all over the world, even in the year 2010.

Rape. These mere four letters make me cringe, but it's a topic that is necessary to discuss. Ignoring the problem doesn't exterminate it, pushing it to the side makes it fester until it is an epidemic like rape is today. Globally, at least one in three women and girls is beaten or sexually abused in her lifetime. A recent survey by the Kenyan Women Rights Awareness Program revealed that 70% of those interviewed said they knew neighbors who beat their wives. Nearly 60% said the women were to blame for the beatings. Just 51% said the men should be punished. A 2005 World Health Organization study reported that within the 12 months prior to the study nearly one third of Ethiopian women had been physically forced by a partner to have sex against their will. In eastern and southern Africa, 17 to 22% of girls aged 15 to 19 are HIV-positive, compared to 3 to 7% of boys of similar age. This pattern—seen in many other regions of the world—is evidence that girls are being infected with HIV by a much older cohort of men. A 2005 study reported that 7% of partnered Canadian women experienced violence at the hands of a spouse between 1999 and 2004. Of these battered women, nearly one-quarter (23%) reported being beaten, choked, or threatened with a knife or gun. In Zimbabwe, domestic violence accounts for more than 60% of murder cases that go through the high court in Harare. And a study in Zaria, Nigeria found that 16% of hospital patients treated for sexually transmitted infections were younger than 5 years old. Do you understand these statistics are about the lack of common humanity?

Does your stomach hurt yet?

Human trafficking is also an issue as 4 million women and girls are trafficked annually, while an estimated one million children, mostly girls, enter the sex trade each year. In a study of 475 people in prostitution from five countries (South Africa, Thailand, Turkey, USA, and Zambia): 62% reported having been raped while in prostitution; 73% reported having experienced physical assault while in prostitution; 92% stated that they wanted to escape from prostitution immediately. With these kinds of statistics, how is it possible for the doubters of feminism to truly believe that there is not a crisis that must be solved? It is necessary for feminists to continue the fight because they address these awful situations and attempt to solve them through hotlines, centers, educating, and various other tools. This manifesto is a declaration of my intent.

I am a feminist. I came out of the "feminist" closet in approximately February 2010. I remember the first time I admitted it was in my Feminist Theory class. It felt so enlightening to finally admit who I was without fear of judgment or lame jokes. Why am I telling you this? Because I used to not be so gung-ho about feminism either. I was afraid that if I supported women's rights than I would be labeled. That's how oppressive forces coerce us to remain subordinate; they make us fearful of being labeled something we are not. Which is why we have to fight in the first place: to eliminate stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination of all people. I advocate that none of you confine yourselves to superficial labels and restrain from doing so to others. And I encourage all of you to live outside the limits of fear, to break molds and challenge unjust customs, to join the fight for equality of all people. I am not weak. I am not subordinate. I am a feminist and I see no reason why having a clit instead of a dick should bar me from knowing what it feels like to be equal.

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I am a feminist. I came out of the “feminist” closet in approximately February 2010. I remember the first time I admitted it was in my Feminist Theory class. It felt so enlightening to finally admit who I was without fear of judgment or lame jokes. Why am I telling you this? Because I used to not be so gung-ho about feminism either. I was afraid that if I supported women's rights than I would be labeled. That's how oppressive forces coerce us to remain subordinate; they make us fearful of being labeled something we are not. Which is why we have to fight in the first place: to eliminate stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination of all people. I advocate that none of you confine yourselves to superficial labels and restrain from doing so to others. And I encourage all of you to live outside the limits of fear, to break molds and challenge unjust customs, to join the fight for equality of all people. I am not weak. I am not subordinate. I am a feminist and I see no reason why having a clit instead of a dick should bar me from knowing what it feels like to be equal.



Let us begin by discussing the different ways that our society defines the word "bitch." For many of us, we think of a mean, aggressive woman when we hear the word bitch. Urbandictionary.com defines a bitch as a woman with a bad attitude, a female dog, and an annoying female who whines a lot. Dictionary.com's definitions for the word include a lewd woman, a female canine, and a malicious, unpleasant, person (especially a woman). In the BITCH Manifesto, a bitch is described as aggressive, bold, independent, outspoken, assertive, and competitive; just to name a few. The BITCH Manifesto attempts to reclaim the word "bitch." It forms a positive image for it by placing it in the same category as admirable qualities such as strong, smart, and in control. However, considering that the original meaning of the word is a female dog, I feel it is better for us as women not to associate the word with positive attributes. Connoting a strong, independent, outspoken woman with a dog is not something that we as feminists should embrace. Rather, we should fight back against the insult that has become far too accepted by our culture.

In our society today, more often than not, women are called bitches as a way of putting us down. People feel that if they do not agree with what we as women are saying or our actions, a simple way of discrediting us is to call us a bitch. Perhaps we spoke out against something or proved someone wrong; and in order to put us in "our place," the person we upset calls us a bitch. By degrading us they are attempting to devalue the things we have to say.

Since the word 'bitch' degrades all women, we must become united in our stance against it. Defend your mother, sister, friend, and stranger when someone dares to call them a bitch. Most importantly, defend yourself! Do not brush it off and move on; this only helps the word become more acceptable for people to say. We as feminists need to stop playing it down and saying things like, "oh, it's not a big deal" or "I don't care, it's just a word." It is more than just a word. It is a tool, used in an attempt to put us in our place as decided by patriarchy and to take away from the things we have to say.

The biggest problem with the word bitch is how common it is. We hear it daily. It has become so commonplace, that many of us do not even acknowledge it when we hear the word; much less confront the person who said it. The main reason it is not addressed is because often when we do say something, we are told to relax or not be so sensitive. From movies and TV, to music, to everyday life; the word bitch is used so often that we are almost programmed to be desensitized to it. This helps the people utilizing the word to keep women submissive, because they can claim it is not a big deal; in turn making you feel foolish for trying to do something about it. But, IT IS A BIG DEAL. We will not sit by and allow others (men in particular) to continue calling us bitches as a way of discrediting the things we say and do.

Layout/Design: Diana L. Moseman - SUNY Oneonta

The Anti-BITCH Manifesto

Ashley Crytzer – Class of 2010

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So, fight back! I encourage you... urge you to stand up for yourself and all women when you hear the word "bitch" being thrown around. Do not ignore the problem, confront it. And do not let anyone tell you that you are wrong for doing so.

The Screamer's Manifesto
Rachel DellaRocco

Why is it that even in a woman's most dire moments she is hesitant to scream? Screaming is a survival mechanism that is part of our inner essence, that exists in all human beings, but for some reason women need to re-learn this instinctive tool in self-defense classes, in moments of utter peril or near insanity. Those who dare and/or are systematically outside the structure, who know how to scream are silenced? This happens in case after case and in situation after situation. Women are constantly denied access to space, whether it is physically, emotionally, linguistically, or even vocally.

Is a woman allowed to scream physically?

There is no statistical backing to know how often women scream, but the evidence is all around us. It is in the quiet and intimate conversation women often have around the kitchen table discussing heavy issues like rape, but only when men are not around; you see it when someone makes a sexist comment and the women hearing it laugh or stay silent; you see it when there is suspicion that a woman may be abused but no action is taken; not even a show of concern for the abused person from any of the women who are only inches away from attack themselves.

Can a woman scream politically?

If a woman conjures the inner strength that is deeply hidden within the most intimate parts of her spirit, away from the personal outreaches of patriarchy, to scream from the depths of her soul outward to the sovereign side of her fellow humanity, is she heard? Or is she punished? When a woman is raped how often have women been ostracized for defying patriarchy and confronting the violent crime that has been committed against her? How often does a woman or young child ever obtain justice for rape, molestation, or any sexual violation?

Can a woman scream within?

Why is it that society continuously tries to dismantle our tools that we need for survival and our humanity? Whatever happened to the little girl that we all once were who did not yet have the awareness of the matrix of domination and hence refused to accommodate her humanity around society's oppressive and hierarchical ideologies? The inner rebellious child that lies within each woman is the intuitive voice that warns of danger and brings creative insight and self-revelation that much of society consistently tries to override and silence.

How is she silenced?

The societal forces that oppress us are designed around a white box structure. Those who uphold the ideal standards of society (White, male, wealthy, heterosexual, able-bodied, young who comply with societal norms) are inside the white box and are constantly pressured to stay within it. Those who lie outside are constantly being reminded that they are "other" and to do everything possible to assimilate and create boxes of their own, whether it be a square woman box, Black box, poor box, etc. Many young girls who are placed under society's generalized white box category, who throw tantrums, are not told they have a strong and fiery spirit that is a valuable trait that can be utilized for the protection and leadership of her fellow humanity. We are told not to scream so as to not remind our oppressors of our suffering.

Those who fall outside of society's little white box have less pressure to comply with the societal rules regarding behavior, but will assuredly be silenced when they use this freedom to defy the structure. "ah, if only silencing was it! Often women are punished for not complying to society with greater prison sentences, increased sexual assault, social scrutiny, and perhaps the most powerful tool of all, the very threat of all of these things. We are publicly punished when we scream as to be made an example by our oppressor.

*sigh the double standard for women continues since just as we are damned when we do and damned when don't, we inadvertently aid our oppressor when we comply and aid our oppressor when we defy.

What is a woman to do, when one of womankind's greatest weapon against oppression is crippled? Together we scream so loud that our calls cannot be silenced. We scream from every from every nook and cranny of society that patriarchy has ever touched so that when we scream in unison against the oppressive forces, we hit every angle of oppression so that no aspect of it is left behind.

We scream to destroy inequality
We scream to empower
We scream to create
We scream to rebuild

...A better world.



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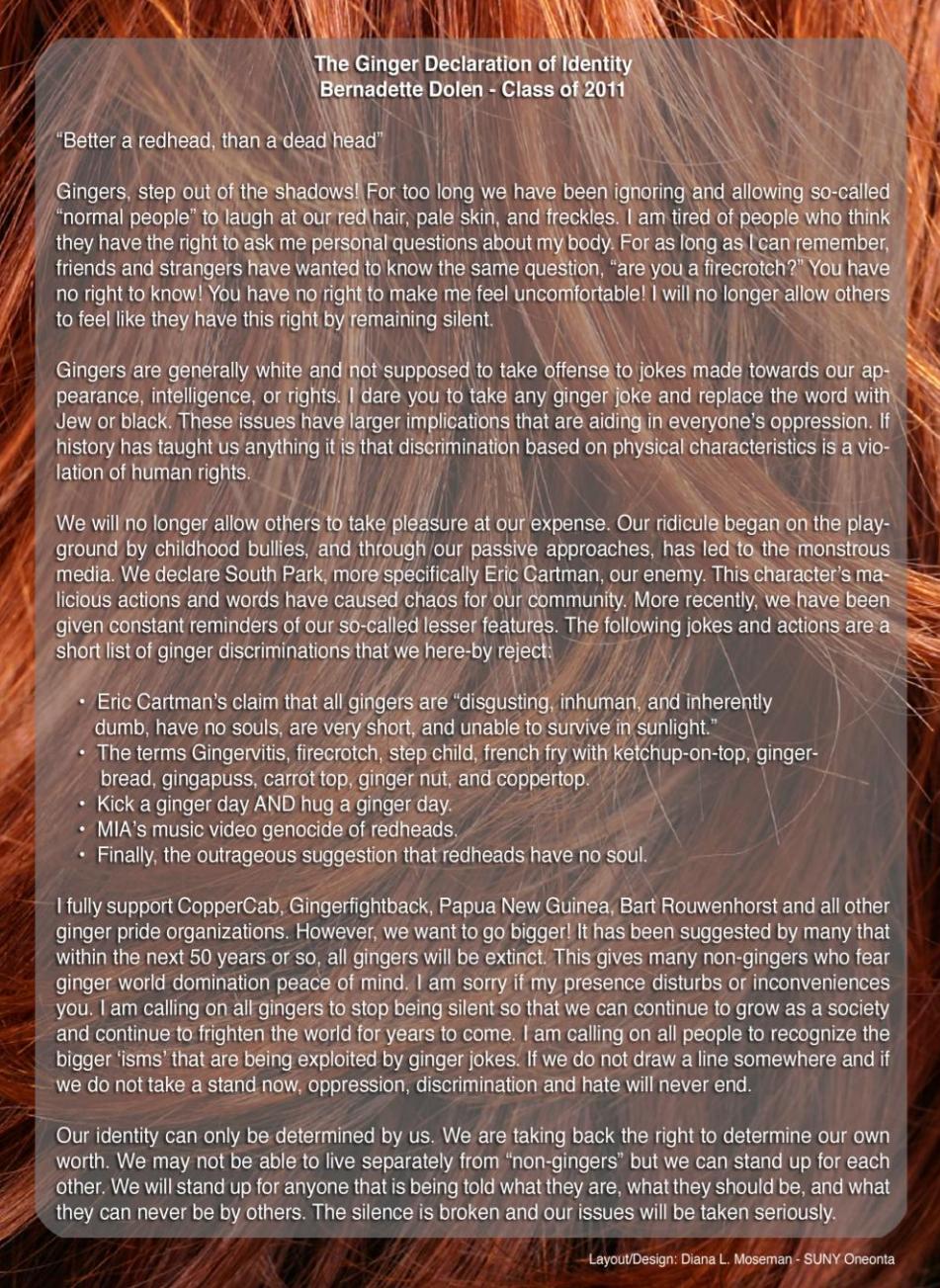
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...A better world.



The Ginger Declaration of Identity

Bernadette Dolen - Class of 2011

"Better a redhead, than a dead head"

Gingers, step out of the shadows! For too long we have been ignoring and allowing so-called "normal people" to laugh at our red hair, pale skin, and freckles. I am tired of people who think they have the right to ask me personal questions about my body. For as long as I can remember, friends and strangers have wanted to know the same question, "are you a firecrotch?" You have no right to know! You have no right to make me feel uncomfortable! I will no longer allow others to feel like they have this right by remaining silent.

Gingers are generally white and not supposed to take offense to jokes made towards our appearance, intelligence, or rights. I dare you to take any ginger joke and replace the word with Jew or black. These issues have larger implications that are aiding in everyone's oppression. If history has taught us anything it is that discrimination based on physical characteristics is a violation of human rights.

We will no longer allow others to take pleasure at our expense. Our ridicule began on the playground by childhood bullies, and through our passive approaches, has led to the monstrous media. We declare South Park, more specifically Eric Cartman, our enemy. This character's malicious actions and words have caused chaos for our community. More recently, we have been given constant reminders of our so-called lesser features. The following jokes and actions are a short list of ginger discriminations that we here-by reject:

- Eric Cartman's claim that all gingers are "disgusting, inhuman, and inherently dumb, have no souls, are very short, and unable to survive in sunlight."
- The terms Gingervitis, firecrotch, step child, french fry with ketchup-on-top, gingerbread, gingapuss, carrot top, ginger nut, and coppertop.
- Kick a ginger day AND hug a ginger day.
- MIA's music video genocide of redheads.
- Finally, the outrageous suggestion that redheads have no soul.

I fully support CopperCab, Gingerfightback, Papua New Guinea, Bart Rouwenhorst and all other ginger pride organizations. However, we want to go bigger! It has been suggested by many that within the next 50 years or so, all gingers will be extinct. This gives many non-gingers who fear ginger world domination peace of mind. I am sorry if my presence disturbs or inconveniences you. I am calling on all gingers to stop being silent so that we can continue to grow as a society and continue to frighten the world for years to come. I am calling on all people to recognize the bigger 'isms' that are being exploited by ginger jokes. If we do not draw a line somewhere and if we do not take a stand now, oppression, discrimination and hate will never end.

Our identity can only be determined by us. We are taking back the right to determine our own worth. We may not be able to live separately from "non-gingers" but we can stand up for each other. We will stand up for anyone that is being told what they are, what they should be, and what they can never be by others. The silence is broken and our issues will be taken seriously.

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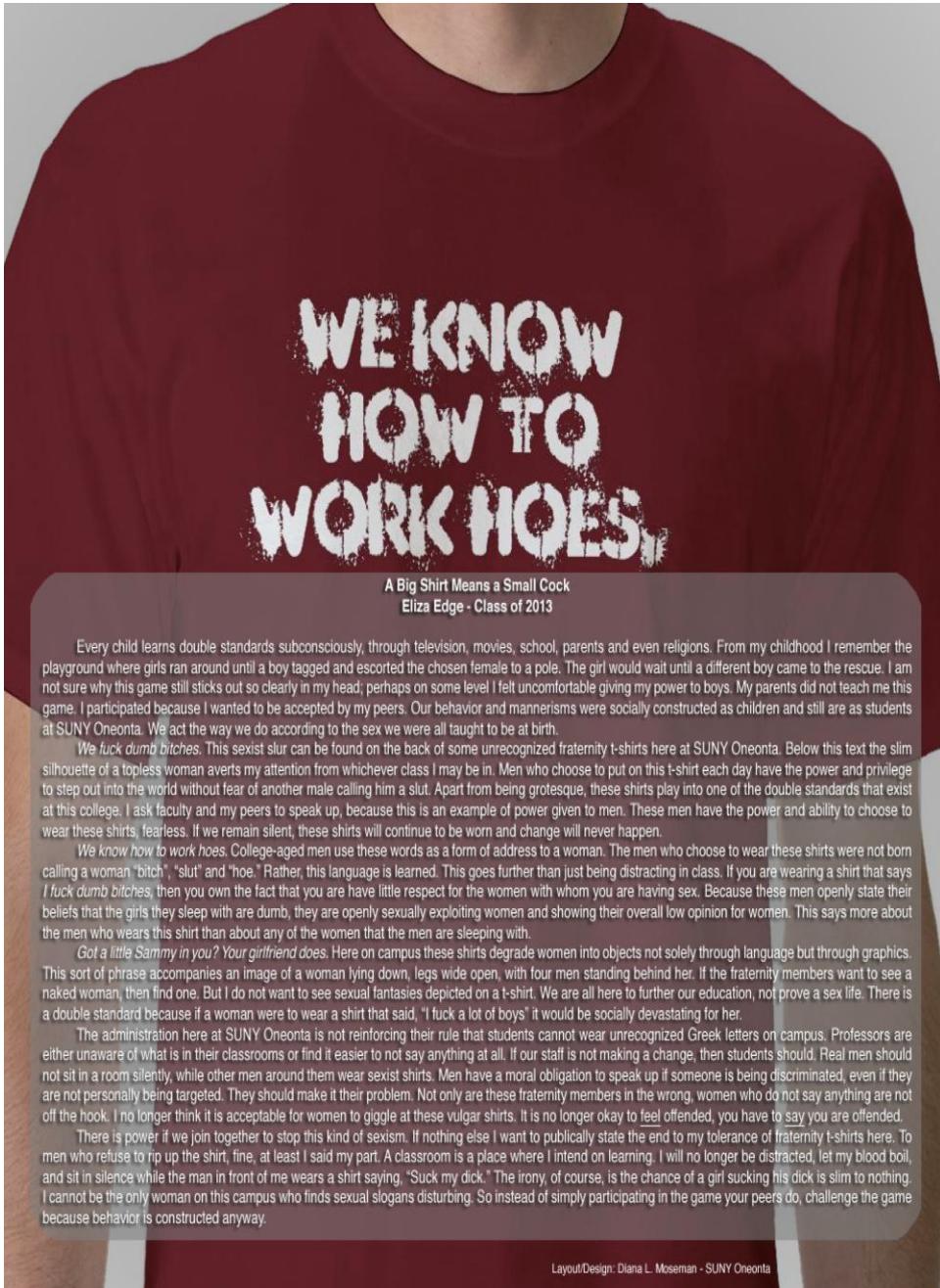
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A Big Shirt Means a Small Cock

Eliza Edge – Class of 2013

Every child learns double standards subconsciously, through television, movies, school, parents and even religions. From my childhood I remember the playground where girls ran around until a boy tagged and escorted the chosen female to a pole. The girl would wait until a different boy came to the rescue. I am not sure why this game still sticks out so clearly in my head; perhaps on some level I felt uncomfortable giving my power to boys. My parents did not teach me this game. I participated because I wanted to be accepted by my peers. Our behavior and mannerisms were socially constructed as children and still are as students at SUNY Oneonta. We act the way we do according to the sex we were all taught to be at birth.

We fuck dumb bitches. This sexist slur can be found on the back of some unrecognized fraternity t-shirts here at SUNY Oneonta. Below this text the slim silhouette of a topless woman averts my attention from whichever class I may be in. Men who choose to put on this t-shirt each day have the power and privilege to step out into the world without fear of another male calling him a slut. Apart from being grotesque, these shirts play into one of the double standards that exist at this college. I ask faculty and my peers to speak up, because this is an example of power given to men. These men have the power and ability to choose to wear these shirts, fearless. If we remain silent, these shirts will continue to be worn and change will never happen.

We know how to work hoes. College-aged men use these words as a form of address to a woman. The men who choose to wear these shirts were not born calling a woman “bitch”, “slut” and “hoe.” Rather, this language is learned. This goes further than just being distracting in class. If you are wearing a shirt that says *I fuck dumb bitches*, then you own the fact that you are have little respect for the women with whom you are having sex. Because these men openly state their beliefs that the girls they sleep with are dumb, they are openly sexually exploiting women and showing their overall low opinion for women. This says more about the men who wears this shirt than about any of the women that the men are sleeping with.

Got a little Sammy in you? Your girlfriend does. Here on campus these shirts degrade women into objects not solely through language but through graphics. This sort of phrase accompanies an image of a woman lying down, legs wide open, with four men standing behind her. If the fraternity members want to see a naked woman, then find one. But I do not want to see sexual fantasies depicted on a t-shirt. We are all here to further our education, not prove a sex life. There is a double standard because if a woman were to wear a shirt that said, “I fuck a lot of boys” it would be socially devastating for her.

The administration here at SUNY Oneonta is not reinforcing their rule that students cannot wear unrecognized Greek letters on campus. Professors are either unaware of what is in their classrooms or find it easier to not say anything

A Big Shirt Means a Small Cock

at all. If our staff is not making a change, then students should. Real men should not sit in a room silently, while other men around them wear sexist shirts. Men have a moral obligation to speak up if someone is being discriminated, even if they are not personally being targeted. They should make it their problem. Not only are these fraternity members in the wrong, women who do not say anything are not off the hook. I no longer think it is acceptable for women to giggle at these vulgar shirts. It is no longer okay to feel offended, you have to say you are offended.

There is power if we join together to stop this kind of sexism. If nothing else I want to publically state the end to my tolerance of fraternity t-shirts here. To men who refuse to rip up the shirt, fine, at least I said my part. A classroom is a place where I intend on learning. I will no longer be distracted, let my blood boil, and sit in silence while the man in front of me wears a shirt saying, "Suck my dick." The irony, of course, is the chance of a girl sucking his dick is slim to nothing. I cannot be the only woman on this campus who finds sexual slogans disturbing. So instead of simply participating in the game your peers do, challenge the game because behavior is constructed anyway.

Grey Rape
Cassandra Santo - Class of 2010

We all remember that day - the day you decided to take our innocence away.

Like a fever you took over our bodies, exerting control through your sexual desire. Like a snake you poisoned your victim, your venom struck with force and it is never to be forgotten.

And we will suffer from this forever - our sexual nature will be tainted for the rest of our lives, and you are to blame for that. Because of you we are made to be afraid, that every man we encounter will treat our bodies as though we are simply vaginas made for you to fuck and torture.

Consuming us with guilt, wondering how we could have made things different, never knowing that there is nothing we could have done to save ourselves from your vicious and selfish trap.

The memory lives in us - as it must live in you as well - but the powerlessness and submissive nature which you have created delves deeper than any memory.

We will no longer live in pain - we will give this guilt a name. And you cannot make us feel ashamed anymore, you will no longer exert your control. This guilt which we must live with will now live in you. By the realization that we are not to blame, it is you who felt that in order to dominate you must take advantage of those you feel superior to.

Maybe your life went on just as normal as night and day, and maybe the fear which you must have seen in our eyes never faded you in the slightest way. Well we will not have you live in comfort and solace anymore - we want you to experience all the emotions which you forced us to endure. The tears, the loneliness, the nightmares, the miserable thoughts which seemed to never go away - we want you to experience those things.

Oh and the guilt - the wrenching, never ending guilt - the kind of guilt that never leaves, the shameful feeling which makes you loathe yourself. Could you possibly imagine what that feels like?

You brought this darkness into our lives, you kept us silent all these years, and now we want it to torture you.

And so dark it has been, even when the shame seemed to subside and a smile came to dress our faces - it was still dark. Dark enough that no one could see the pain feasting in our souls, dark enough that sometimes it all felt like a dream, dark enough to remind us to keep our mouths closed even when it was all too much - so dark that even in the company of others, we are still alone.

Suffering, suffering, suffering - suffering until the day came when we discovered we were not alone, that there were so many out there who understood. That there were so many out there who had experienced it, who continue to experience it until they can go on no more, and we are still suffering with the thought that any other woman has to feel as we have. That any other woman has to understand the nameless guilt, has to cope with your actions, and live with the thought that maybe things could have been different.

And what gives you the right to prance around and ruin lives, to gallop about like a soulless fool? What gives you the right to find your joy in the pain and suffering of others? How do you sleep at night thinking of the countless women whom must go on each day with the memory of your actions?

After years of fighting to forgive ourselves, we can offer you no such forgiveness, no remorse; it is not like you ever felt the need to apologize on your own behalf.

This guilt we have been forced to live with demands to have a name - it demands to be heard.

They say for what you do to others you do to yourself - we know in all truth that you could never understand our guilt, our silence, our self betrayal. We would never wish these feelings on any other woman, but we will wish them unto you.

We will wish for you to suffer silently, guilt fully, lonely, and afraid - and when your time comes we will stand over your grave to be sure that you are dead. Because you have killed a part of us, you have stolen a piece of our souls - and we want it back.

We want to share with the world what being raped feels like, we want you to hear us plead for you to stop once more - we want you to hear it loudly. We want every person, every soul to hear our cries, to feel this silent guilt inside of them, to understand the damage that has been caused - the damage that is never fully repaired.

Do you hear us?

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dark enough to remind us to keep our mouths closed even when it was all too much – so dark that even in the company of others, we are still alone.

Suffering, suffering, suffering – suffering until the day came when we discovered we were not alone, that there were so many out there who understood. That there were so many out there who had experienced it, who continue to experience it until they can go on no more, and we are still suffering with the thought that any other woman has to feel as we have. That any other woman has to understand the nameless guilt, has to cope with your actions, and live with the thought that maybe things could have been different.

And what gives you the right to prance around and ruin lives, to gallop about like a soulless fool? What gives you the right to find your joy in the pain and suffering of others? How do you sleep at night thinking of the countless women whom must go on each day with the memory of your actions?

After years of fighting to forgive ourselves, we can offer you no such forgiveness, no remorse; it is not like you ever felt the need to apologize on your own behalf.

This guilt we have been forced to live with demands to have a name - it demands to be heard.

They say for what you do to others you do to yourself - we know in all truth that you could never understand our guilt, our silence, our self betrayal. We would never wish these feelings on any other woman, but we will wish them unto you.

We will wish for you to suffer silently, guilt fully, lonely, and afraid - and when your time comes we will stand over your grave to be sure that you are dead. Because you have killed a part of us, you have stolen a piece of our souls - and we want it back.

We want to share with the world what being raped feels like, we want you to hear us plead for you to stop once more - we want you to hear it loudly. We want every person, every soul to hear our cries, to feel this silent guilt inside of them, to understand the damage that has been caused - the damage that is never fully repaired.

Do you hear us?

Validating Invisibility; A Manifesto
Gretchen Schwalbach - Class of 2011

Located in an anonymous space, comparable to where the sea meets the shore, I am unknown, fluid and free. *I refuse to be located.*

Being does not imply an understanding of identity within the illogical standard, but rather a conceptualization of my reality as ambiguous and self-determined. *I will not superficially elaborate on or define my ambiguity, as it is individual and the intricate nature of its power need not be relatable.*

I have been delivered from the stranglehold of perception. Reverence for my identity as is, not as perceived, allows for an escape from stratification. Given the standard of perceptibility defying expectation by demanding to determine my identity renders me invisible. *I refuse to permit abuse by validating tepid sense.*

I defy expectations and assumptions by demanding to determine my reality. As a gendered being, a false existence is imposed upon me. *Those who impose standards upon me have no regard for the truth.*

The standard demands I keep my chains intact. At birth, I was bestowed with the burden of validating privilege. I exist in the minds of those who adhere by normalized standards, as an inaccessible "other". *I refute superiority in any fashion, and call out those who live by its false promises as incompetent cowards.*

Superiority is granted by the illogical structure of oppression, not earned, or attained through efforts of the individual. *Those who thrive on privilege are disgraceful to humanity.*

I aim to confuse the scheme that I ought to be invested in an expression of sexuality or sexual politics that validates the arrogance and brutality of masculinity. *Fucking me into submission is not an option.*

The constructed gender system is detrimental to self-determinism, and lacks space for a conceptualization of identity that does not neatly assimilate into established norms. *Evasive expression poses a challenge to the structure; such challenge is met with attempts at dehumanization.*

I intentionally confound those who aim to prosper on my perceived inferiority. *I refuse to be predictable, constant, benign or complacent.*

I own my thoughts, body and dreams. I strive to control my destiny, determine how my body is used and to speak and hear truth. I refuse to accept and/or adhere by oppressive structural norms. *I name any individual who perpetuates injustice in their interactions and perceptions as an adversary.*

In order to challenge or destroy, one must familiarize themselves with the opposition; I am engaged in truth seeking, perception bending, categorical manipulation. *Game on.*

For those who are angered, uncomfortable or offended by my approach, stance, or truth, *I offer you this consolation. I prefer to remain as ambiguous as your logic.*

Layout/Design: Diana L. Moseman - SUNY Oneonta

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A woman with long blonde hair is shown from the chest up. She wears a crown of thorns made of twigs and metal shards. Red paint or blood is streaked down her forehead and cheeks. Her eyes are wide and looking upwards. The background is dark and textured.

Sinner or Saint, Who Cares What I Ain't?
Morgan Skrabalak - Class of 2013

Roman Catholics believe that if they follow the laws of the church, then they will be saved from their own sins, yet the Roman Catholic religion has not saved me, it has restrained me. I feel as if my choices in life have restricted me. In the Roman Catholic religion, I was taught to believe that God created man, and that the woman came from man. I was taught that God is my savior and that he can absolve me from all of my sins. I was taught that I must value the teachings of the Roman Catholic faith in order to be considered a "good Catholic," yet these values can be exploiting towards women, and they have exploited me.

Within American society, I am granted the right of freedom of expression. As an American citizen, I am able to make my own decisions for myself based on what I value personally and not what the Roman Catholic church tells me to value.

I refuse to be silenced and denied the right to make my own choices. I refuse to be subjected to gender roles based on the Roman Catholic ideology. The Roman Catholic Church supports the position of women to the subordinate role through the teachings of God and man being superior to all else. Women who wish to be seen as independent and powerful are seen as weak and obedient within the Roman Catholic faith. I am independent; I am powerful; and I am a woman.

As a woman, I have the right to govern my own body. The Roman Catholic faith states that the use of birth control, as well as the act of an abortion is sinful. As a woman, I should not be prevented from the use of birth control and/or the decision to have an abortion. I have the right to choose if and how I wish to protect my body.

I have the right as a human being to choose how I wish to live. The teachings of the Roman Catholic religion deem women as either virgins or whores-nothing in between. I will no longer repent for my sexual experiences or feel forced to fit into their molds. The Roman Catholic Church will no longer sway my conscience as a sexual being.

As a woman, I can decide if I wish to marry and to whom. The Roman Catholic faith supports the idea that only straight marriages are acceptable within the Roman Catholic religion. The Roman Catholic also tells me that I must procreate in order to be an active member of the Roman Catholic Church. Both of these aspects support the idea that a "normal" family exists, and that this "normal" family consists of a man and a woman and children of their own flesh and blood. This excludes individuals based on their sexuality. I will no longer feel the pressure of marriage or the pressure to have and raise children. I will no longer allow my religion to define my sexuality.

I believe a value should be attained by an act of free will; the Roman Catholic religion has denied me that ability. I no longer wish to feel as if my values have been imposed upon me. Instead of guiding me to feelings of empowerment and enlightenment, the Roman Catholic faith once left me feeling restrained and confused. I refuse to be subjected to containment; I wish to define myself the way I choose.

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Anything You Can Do I Can Do Better.
Madison Slagle - Class of 2012

What do you think when you hear woman athlete? Big? Strong? Aggressive? Lesbian? I am not trying to stand here and say that ALL people think these things but from my experience, more times than not this is what people think when they hear woman athlete. I personally do not mind the aspect of being viewed as big, strong, and aggressive because I am all of those things and I am not afraid or ashamed to embrace them but when it comes to the term 'lesbian', I have a problem.

Women athletes are stereotyped as lesbians because of the masculinity and dominance of the sport we are playing, in this particular case, basketball. Men have been playing this sport before we ever dreamt of playing; therefore it started off as a man's sport and is still seen as a man's sport. Women who play this sport are deemed manly in one way or another, and this brings along the stereotype of being a lesbian.

I have played sports my entire life and as the level of competition has grown, the stereotype has become stronger. In elementary school, sports were something fun to do and helped people meet friends and get involved in physical activity. When you reached junior high, it became a little more serious and the practice schedule was a little stricter. However, most of the girls on the team were usually just playing because it was something fun to do with their friends and they had a good time doing it. Progressing to the Junior Varsity and Varsity level in high school became more of a competition. It was competitive to the point where most of the people on the team really wanted to be there because they either loved the sport they were playing, they had some athletic ability, or both. As you get to college it is obviously a very competitive and strict, time consuming activity. You are there because you either got recruited by your coach or you tried out for the team and had to work really hard to earn your spot. Everyone is the best of the best from their high school and everyone knows what they are doing and wants to become better athletes as an individual and as a team.

My problem is not with lesbians, but the way you use the term. I do not see that label as derogatory, but you do. That's why you use it to try to silence us. It is a stereotype that is being applied as a putdown towards a group of women who are accomplishing something that at one time only men had jurisdiction over, sports. It is just like any other situation in life, when someone is moving forward in a specific area of interest there will always be people who want to interfere with this movement and try and stop what they are doing. In the case of women athletes there are so many negative forces trying to stop us from becoming "just as good as men." They see us becoming better and better year after year in basketball and every other sport that they so-called "created" and they cannot stand it. So why not come up with a stereotype that will make us question our efforts, scare us away from this game that we love. This stereotype is 'lesbian'. People call us lesbians because we have similar characteristics of the men's team; we are athletic, we are aggressive, we are dominant, and we embrace these things.

When people use this stereotype towards women athletes they are using it as a way to make us feel less worthy of our accomplishments. In the history of our society women are not usually dominant and aggressive and when people see women succeeding, a negative term is usually associated with what they are doing to make their accomplishments seem less worthy.

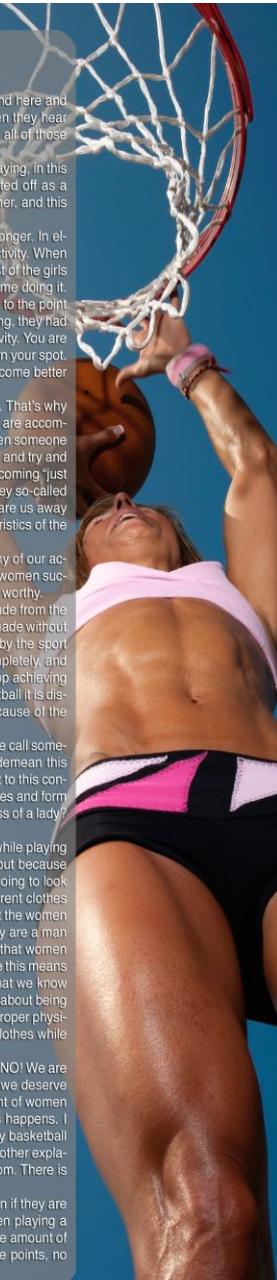
In my experience when someone calls a straight person a lesbian it is because of some judgment they have made from the way this person dresses or the people this person hangs out with or the way that they act. This judgment has been made without actually having any supported evidence if this person is actually a lesbian or not. And in our case, we are judged by the sport we play. The group will begin to think of ways to get rid of this stereotype or ways to get out of this stereotype completely, and what better way to get away then quit. But that is what these outside forces want us to do, quit. They want us to stop achieving excellence in this sport that was created by men. When we are stereotyped as lesbians just because we play basketball it is disheartening because after all this work we have put forth we are shot down and seen as some negative entity because of the way we are viewed by people who see sports, particularly basketball, as a so-called 'man's sport'.

People in our society see being a lesbian as a negative thing because it is different and not 'normal'. When people call someone a lesbian before actually knowing if they are or not they are using this term to simply put them down and demean this person. When you see a woman dressed in sports shorts and tank tops playing a "man's sport", people are brought to this conclusion that these women must be lesbians because they are not dressed like a lady. A "real" lady wears cute dresses and form fitting outfits, not basketball shorts and a tank top. Well, I am a LADY and I play basketball, so does this make me less of a lady? Absolutely not.

One of the main factors of why people came up with this 'lesbian' stereotype is because of the way we dress while playing basketball. People stereotype women athletes as lesbians not only for the negative connotation to put us down, but because when you see the men's team dressing in the same travel gear and wearing the same outfit at practice you are going to look at the women's team and see the similarities in the clothes we are wearing. Women usually wear completely different clothes from guys outside the sports world, but when you see men and women wearing the same thing you get the idea that the women are like the men in more ways than just the things they are wearing. If you take a cross dresser for example, if they are a man they wear the clothes of a woman, and if they are a woman they wear the clothes of a man. So would you argue that women athletes are cross dressers based solely on the fact that we wear clothes that resemble men's clothing? So therefore this means that we want to be men, right? WRONG! Maybe, just maybe, we are just comfortable enough with our sexuality that we know we can dress in a way that we feel is appropriate for the activities that we are participating in without having to worry about being judged. Would it make sense to dress in jeans shorts and a t-shirt and try to run around and be able to make the proper physical maneuvers required to accomplish what we want on the court? Why would it make sense to wear restricting clothes while playing a sport that has endless possibilities?

Because men have been dominating the athletic world, it is viewed that we are trying to become more like men. NO! We are creating a name for ourselves. We are taking part in a sport that we love. We are taking back the dominance that we deserve as a human being and as an athlete. When people see this dominance in women they feel threatened. The thought of women becoming "as good as men" brings people to see that we are actually accomplishing something. God forbid this happens. I cannot tell you how many times I come across a guy who thinks that just because I am a built woman who can play basketball well, and it does not help that I am on a collegiate team, it must only mean that I am a lesbian--because there is no other explanation, right? It could not be that I just work really hard and I have passion for a sport that brings me joy and freedom. There is just no way that a 'true woman' could be that good at a 'man's sport'.

Because sports are such a 'manly' thing, people see women as trying to be like men. They must want to be men if they are trying to enter into a world of things that men have created, such as sports. Why can't we just be seen as women playing a sport? There is no difference between men and women sports. We all do the same workouts, we all spend the same amount of time in the gym, and a basket is still two points, a foul shot is still one point, and a three pointer is still worth three points, no matter if you are a man or a woman. And for the record, my sexuality is none of your fucking business.



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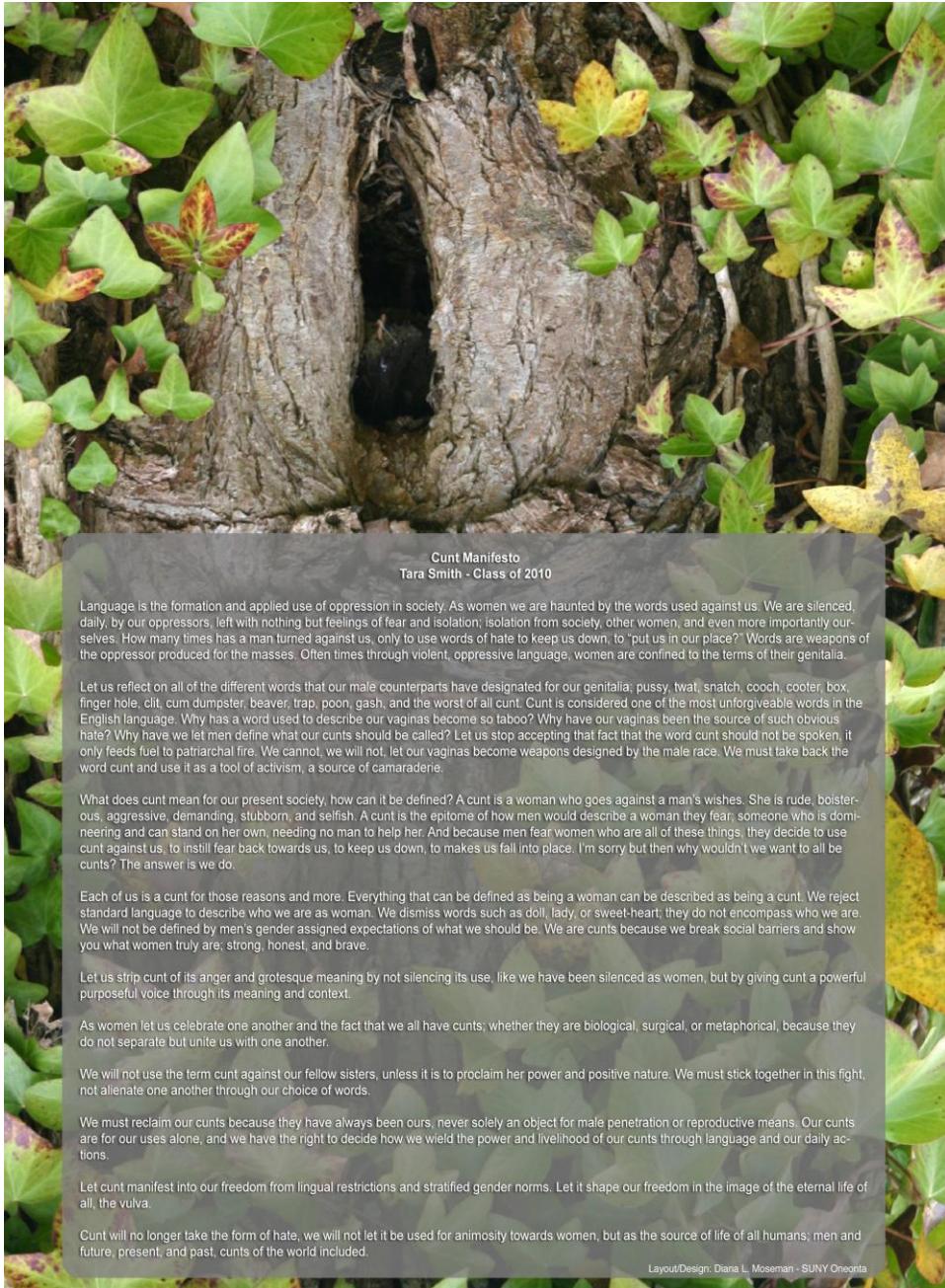
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Cunt Manifesto

Tara Smith – Class of 2010

Language is the formation and applied use of oppression in society. As women we are haunted by the words used against us. We are silenced, daily, by our oppressors, left with nothing but feelings of fear and isolation; isolation from society, other women, and even more importantly ourselves. How many times has a man turned against us, only to use words of hate to keep us down, to “put us in our place?” Words are weapons of the oppressor produced for the masses. Often times through violent, oppressive language, women are confined to the terms of their genitalia.

Let us reflect on all of the different words that our male counterparts have designated for our genitalia; pussy, twat, snatch, cooch, cooter, box, finger hole, clit, cum dumpster, beaver, trap, poon, gash, and the worst of all cunt. Cunt is considered one of the most unforgiveable words in the English language. Why has a word used to describe our vaginas become so taboo? Why have our vaginas been the source of such obvious hate? Why have we let men define what our cunts should be called? Let us stop accepting that fact that the word cunt should not be spoken, it only feeds fuel to patriarchal fire. We cannot, we will not, let our vaginas become weapons designed by the male race. We must take back the word cunt and use it as a tool of activism, a source of camaraderie.

What does cunt mean for our present society, how can it be defined? A cunt is a woman who goes against a man’s wishes. She is rude, boisterous, aggressive, demanding, stubborn, and selfish. A cunt is the epitome of how men would describe a woman they fear; someone who is domineering and can stand on her own, needing no man to help her. And because men fear women who are all of these things, they decide to use cunt against us, to instill fear back towards us, to keep us down, to makes us fall into place. I’m sorry but then why wouldn’t we want to all be cunts? The answer is we do.

Each of us is a cunt for those reasons and more. Everything that can be defined as being a woman can be described as being a cunt. We reject standard language to describe who we are as woman. We dismiss words such as doll, lady, or sweet-heart; they do not encompass who we are. We will not be defined by men’s gender assigned expectations of what we should be. We are cunts because we break social barriers and show you what women truly are; strong, honest, and brave.

Let us strip cunt of its anger and grotesque meaning by not silencing its use, like we have been silenced as women, but by giving cunt a powerful purposeful voice through its meaning and context.

Cunt Manifesto

As women let us celebrate one another and the fact that we all have cunts; whether they are biological, surgical, or metaphorical, because they do not separate but unite us with one another.

We will not use the term cunt against our fellow sisters, unless it is to proclaim her power and positive nature. We must stick together in this fight, not alienate one another through our choice of words.

We must reclaim our cunts because they have always been ours, never solely an object for male penetration or reproductive means. Our cunts are for our uses alone, and we have the right to decide how we wield the power and livelihood of our cunts through language and our daily actions.

Let cunt manifest into our freedom from lingual restrictions and stratified gender norms. Let it shape our freedom in the image of the eternal life of all, the vulva.

Cunt will no longer take the form of hate, we will not let it be used for animosity towards women, but as the source of life of all humans; men and future, present, and past, cunts of the world included.

"Women of Color & Sexuality Stereotypes Manifesto"
Amanda Vasquez - Class of 2010

Fieri, Exotic, Sexual, Unusual.

These are just some of the many names that women of color have to face. For centuries we have seen these minority women labeled as hypersexual beings who are uncontrollable. Dragon Lady, Latina Spitfire and Jezebel. What do these names mean? This inaccurate representation in our society has denied us opportunities and oppressed us in ways that white women have never experienced. We are intelligent women, but instead are viewed as hot sexual mani solely capable of only offering that. Men have the power to create these names that determine our sexual identity as an entire group. We are expected to fulfill this fantasy that is placed upon us before we even establish a sexuality of our own. We are defined by the color of our skin, inscribed by social structures, carved and tattooed with the sharp needles of our society.

The Different Colors of Sexual Stereotypes

All women of color face the same oppression through these stereotypes in addition to being a woman. Trying to find our own identity while simultaneously fighting against old and new stereotypes makes it extremely difficult to be seen as nothing more than sexual beings. We walk down the streets hearing "Pero mira esa cuerpo, look at that body, I bet she's great in bed" which is a constant reminder of our unique oppression as women of color.

Let us refer to the biggest social influence there is in our culture, the media. Hollywood too often casts women of color to show her "extreme lust" for a white male. We are often portrayed as the mistress who tries to steal your man, or the crazy uncontrollable girlfriend who is seen as ghetto and obnoxious. But the women of color who play these roles and falsely representing our culture are another part of the issue. When we have women of color both consciously and unconsciously support these stereotypes, the cycle only continues. Women of color understand what it feels like to live under these stereotypes and therefore should want to work towards change rather than support it.

Let's take Rosie Perez and Jennifer Lopez, for example. Rosie Perez is the foul-mouth, dark-skinned Puerto Rican that you would typically see playing only working-class roles. But Jennifer Lopez, a much lighter-skinned Latina, can acquire a role of a European descent and fit into characters that are a part of a middle class. The most obvious reason for these clichéd characterizations has to do with the color of our skin. Rosie Perez's heavy accent and dark skin cannot be de-ethnicized. Whereas a fair skinned Jennifer Lopez has more ethnic mobility across a range of sexualities in which darker women do not have access to. Most of these women are idealized. They are Hollywood figures that hold the responsibility of our representation. And instead of acknowledging that power they are supporting the lack of respect society has on our sexuality. So what happens to the young girls who are putting on Mam's bra and stuffing it with tissue just to fit into this label? Women of color have no control over which stereotypes are placed upon them but we do have a choice as to how depict ourselves.

The Continued Generation of the Stereotypes

The common practices shared in raising children within families of color have a strong effect on our sexuality. Men are afforded more power and hold a dominant position within the family where he must provide and protect. But it is the daughter that must be disciplined. She is thought to need protection from a sexually dangerous society and therefore must preserve her virginity. This is why our personal sexual identities are often never established. Sex and sexuality is understood as being malicious and should never even cross your mind until your adult years. Because of this notion that sex is shameful, this generates the idea that we are "freakier" than the average woman, and for the rest of our lives we have this understanding placed on our sexuality. We are turning our backs on the past generations of this society because change is needed! Our women of color, our mothers and grandmothers, must educate our daughters and sisters so that we can become aware of this patriarchal society and attain new ways to improve our representation as an entire group. Without the education and understanding of their sexuality, they will believe society's definition of how a Latina should act, and we will never be able to move forward.

What Must Be Done

Women of color are born into a pool of stereotypes. But we have the power to stand up against these demonizing terms and create change. We must not lose our sexualities but rather come together to form new and positive ways that represent our own individual sexualities.

- 1) We must educate our future generations of young women that sex is natural.
- 2) We must explain why and how these stereotypes have been created towards women of color and the affects it has on our cultures.
- 3) We must stop supporting these stereotypes; that includes our own daily practices at home and within our communities, as well as in the media and television.
- 4) We must identify with our sisters and relate to each other's oppression with consideration. We will not continue to call each other by these stereotypes but fight for the acknowledgement and respect of our own sexualities and differences.

If we want to work towards equality between both sexes, we must first begin with the equality and respect of all our women, no matter her color.

Layout/Design: Diana L. Moseman - SUNY Oneonta

“Women of Color & Sexuality Stereotypes Manifesto”

Amanda Vasquez – Class of 2010

Fiery, Exotic, Sexual, Unusual.

These are just some of the many names that women of color have to face. For centuries we have seen these minority women labeled as hypersexual beings who are uncontrollable. Dragon Lady, Latina Spitfire and Jezebel. What do these names mean? This inaccurate representation in our society has denied us opportunities and oppressed us in ways that white women have never experienced. We are intelligent women, but instead are viewed as that sexual *mami* solely capable of only offering that. Men have the power to create these names that determine our sexual identity as an entire group. We are expected to fulfill this fantasy that is placed upon us before we even establish a sexuality of our own. We are defined by the color of our skin, inscribed by social structures, carved and tattooed with the sharp needles of our society.

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The Abilities Manifesto
Wesley B. Worrell - Class of 2011

When you look at someone what do you see? A man, a woman, their race, religion or even age? What would you do if we told you that all of what you know could be in jeopardy because of a disability?

Throughout history many of our brothers and sisters have been excluded, minimized and oppressed because of their disabilities; this needs to come to an end.

In the Year 2010, there are still places that are not wheelchair accessible and streets in towns and even cities that do not have cut curves for those who are physically disabled; public places that do not accommodate the deaf or blind. When someone cannot get somewhere because of their disability, that presents a problem not only for them, but also for society. Because something as simple as this can stop someone from their pursuit of happiness guaranteed in the Declaration of Independence. In many cases, it is like segregation.

Before we get into what we need to progress and our demands we will tell you this: disabled does not mean unable by any means.

We no longer want your pity and we do not want you to look down on any one of us. ANYTHING you can do we can do as well even if it is with assistance. Bottom line, it can be done.

We need programs; for example, the integration of the disabled and those without disabilities in elementary schools. This will teach children to not look at our differences as weakness and to learn acceptance at a young age. Hopefully this will prevent them from becoming like the people who judge us, and the government that takes our funds.

We are tired of the government telling us that they are cutting the funds we need to live comfortably when we are in a multi-billion dollar war. In many cases, they are taking away our basic needs such as housing, transportation and in some cases, even education.

We need people to lend a hand and not their pity.

We are coming forward with this Manifesto today because one can argue that we are all disabled, whether you want to believe it or not.

We argue that if a man does not look like the 'perfect man' or a woman does not look like the 'perfect woman,' society may look at this person as someone with a disability. And there is nothing wrong with that.

We also know that if people have the pleasure of becoming an older citizen then they will also be considered disabled in some sense and there is nothing wrong with that either.

We are mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, friends, doctors, lawyers, teachers, professors, athletes and so much more.

One of the most remarkable presidents of the United States of America, Franklin D. Roosevelt, had what physicians believe was polio which paralyzed certain parts of his body.

To our brothers and sisters who do not consider themselves to be disabled it is all right, because it is not the first thing we think about when we wake up either. However, we ask you all to help us in our fight against the many forms of oppression that we have faced.

'Read my manifesto and it will tell you who I am' - Valeria Solanas

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"Single Woman Manifesto"
Shelley Zoeller - Class of 2011

We, single heterosexual women are finished. Finished with what? With being pressured to be in a relationship at all times. With feeling measured by what man we are dating. We do not want to be judged by the man we are with, or his job, car, home, income, and accomplishments. We have our own successes you can rate us by.

We do not need to be with a man to feel worthwhile. We do not need to be with a man to be happy. Our happiness does not hinge upon our ability to make a man happy.

We do not want to be called 'lesbians' just because we are independent and strong. Women can do things on their own and still be successful. We do not want to be pitied. We are not damaged. If we are your ex-girlfriends, we are not crazy psychos. We are merely better off without you. We do not need a man to make decisions for us. We do not need to spend our days and nights caring for a man. We are not being selfish by taking care of ourselves first. We are human. In living as decent human beings, we should be encouraged to better ourselves, not only the man who we are in a relationship with.

We do not need to dress in 'Will he notice me' outfits nor 'Will he think I look hot' outfits. Instead we wear 'Do I feel good?' outfits. Our attention is focused on making ourselves better people rather than bettering ourselves to impress men.

We are neither lesser nor more of a woman than women who are married and have families. We may become those women one day but do not treat us differently for not being her now. We are not against being in a relationship; we are against being in a relationship for the wrong reasons. We are not man haters, we are supporters of women.

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