



The Monthly Rag

Block I, 2009



Brought to you by the Feminist and Gender Studies Interns

What is Feminism Anyway?

Feminism is a diverse collection of social theories, political movements, and moral philosophies. Some versions are critical of past and present social relations. Many focus on analyzing what they believe to be social constructions of gender and sexuality. Many focus on studying gender inequality and promoting women's rights, interests, and issues.

Feminist theory aims to understand the nature of gender inequality and focuses on gender politics, power relations and sexuality. Feminism is also based on experiences of gender roles and relations. Feminist political activism commonly campaign on issues such as reproductive rights, violence within a domestic partnership, maternity leave, equal pay, sexual harassment,

discrimination, and sexual violence. Themes explored in feminism include patriarchy, stereotyping, objectification, sexual objectification, and oppression.

Modern feminist theory has been criticized as being predominantly, but not exclusively, associated with Western middle-class academia. Feminist activism, however, is a grass-roots movement that seeks to cross boundaries based on social class, race, culture, and religion. It is culturally specific and addresses issues relevant to the women of that society: for example female circumcision in Sudan, or the glass ceiling in developed economies. Some issues, such as rape, incest, and mothering, are universal.

<http://www.womensstudies.eku.edu/what>

Feminism, sex, gender, sexuality, periods, bodies, choices, relationships, education, activism: talk about it at **FemCo**, Mondays at 7:00pm ID house. (1115 N. Cascade)

"I am a feminist because it gives me freedom to be myself. Feminism allows me to define my own standards for beauty, strength, and wisdom rather than limiting myself to society's strict standards for an ideal woman. Also, being a feminist empowers me to make informed decisions about my life and my body."

—Marley Hamrick ~2013~

Question asked of an FGS intern:

"What advice do you have for those who think they may be bisexual, pansexual, or omnisexual?"

"You are the holder of your own desire, your own pleasure and your own peace. Allow them to flow freely, in whichever directions they pull, so long as you do it with love, with respect, with intention--so long as you are willing to learn, to live, and to grow into the person who are meant to become and the relationships you are meant to share.

And be mindful of false defenses. You do not have to justify your existence or your identity by buying into traditional notions of monogamy, family, or normative ways of doing/having sex. You are free to exist and to explore as you truly are-- experienced or new, vanilla or kink, poly or not, silly or sweet-- so long as its safe and consensual."

—Adison T. Petti

Want to know more about gender and sexuality?
Come learn from Bisexual Activist and Transgender Advocate Robyn Ochs!
National Coming Out Day Events October 12 and 13
Stay Tuned For Details!



Sexy Sex Workers by Beth Kancilia

Now I had the chance to really see what it meant to be a legal sex-worker, taking the afternoon shift. Aside from all having the same occupation, these women had something else in common: There was absolutely nothing "sexy" about this sex business.

I watched men come and go from these three workers' doors, and all of them had seen the same acts I had: chomping gum, clipping toenails, and chowing down on greasy fastfood. Yet, the smell of a Big Mac (or whatever the equivalent is in the Netherlands) on the sex-worker's breath or toenail clippings at the foot of the cot wasn't keeping these customers away. It wasn't keeping other men from ogling in the streets either. No one seemed to mind these very real, very human, and very "unfeminine" activities. I remembered seeing similar things in the Red Light District a few nights before—women picking their teeth, scratching themselves, and even a woman smelling her armpits to make sure that she was fresh and ready.

And while I suppose I could have thrown this experience aside into the feminist pile labeled

"Sex Work Is Disgusting, Unsexy, and "Trashy", See!?" or "Of Course The Men Don't Care, All They Want Is Sex!", I can't help but to take a genuine, personal, feminist moment and love what I watched. There was nothing fake about these women's actions; they were selling themselves—burger-eating, gum-smacking, nose-picking, toenail-hacking, moneymaking women. Yes, they were selling sex, they were selling femininity, but there was more to it than that. It was real, it was vulnerable, it was normal, and it was sexy. They had nothing to hide, including their bodies. It didn't matter to them that they were about to perform the most traditional feminine act. They certainly weren't acting traditionally feminine up until that point.

Of course this anecdote doesn't address the political, cultural, and ethical problems potentially associated with sex-work worldwide, but the irony and genuineness of these women is worth noting in a place where it is legal, safe(r), and regulated.

~Amsterdam Semester 2009

Hey CC!

Do you have a question? Are there things about feminism and gender that you don't understand? Do you want to know about resources, or want more information about something in our publication?

We'll be answering one of YOUR questions in every Monthly Rag!

Contact Andi:

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