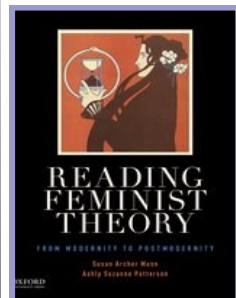




# The Monthly Rag

Brought to You by the Feminist & Gender Studies Student Advisory Council and Edited by Ivy Wappler (FGS '18)



**Editor's Note:** The articles in this issue were written by students in FG200 Feminist Theory, taught by Professor Heidi R. Lewis during Block 6. Feminism aims to seek justice for people and communities that are systematically and systemically marginalized based on gender, race, sexuality, class, and other social, cultural, and political markers. Feminist theory, then, tries to understand, explain, and interrogate the impetuses for and implications of power and dominance. As feminist theory is interdisciplinary, we will examine theorists from a variety of disciplines including, but not limited to, sociology, psychology, history, literature, political science, anthropology, and economics. Along these lines, will also study the ways in which feminist theory advances intellectual collaboration both within and outside of the academy.

## The Effect of Zika Virus on Women's Reproductive Rights By Cheanna Gavin (FGS '18)

In April 2015, an outbreak of Zika fever, which is caused by Zika virus began in Brazil, and spread primarily across the Americas. Recently, scientists have begun to make connections between the Zika virus in pregnant women and the development of microcephaly in their fetuses. Currently in Brazil, abortion is illegal and women who perform or consent to abortions face one to three years in prison. In "Brazilian Legislators Look to Increase Abortion Penalties in the Wake of Zika Outbreak," Matt Sandy points out, "politicians in Brazil are drafting plans to stiffen existing abortion laws and give jail terms of four-and-a-half years to women who abort fetuses with microcephaly." The spread of the Zika virus and the reactions that have arisen can be analyzed using a socialist feminist lens; the approach Brazil's legislators are using to combat this virus can be analyzed through a liberal feminist lens. These feminist frameworks reveal the ongoing fight over women's reproductive rights and the struggle social feminist work faces in working to liberate women through cultural and economic sources of oppression.

According to Susan A. Mann in *Reading Feminist Theory: From Modernity to Postmodernity*, socialist feminists, among others, were some of the first U.S. feminists to "demand women's rights to birth control and abortion" (144). The results of the lack of contraceptives and denial of abortion that women in Brazil are experiencing are similar to Margaret Sanger's experience of illegal abortions and superficial cures among poor and working class women that she describes in *My Fight for Birth Control*. Along these lines, Sandy discusses a feminist movement in Brazil called the Institute of Bioethics, which is working to legalize abortion for fetuses with microcephaly and for all women diagnosed with Zika, and to ensure that women have access to contraceptives and Zika tests. This work coincides with that of Sanger who writes, "I resolved that women should have knowledge of contraception. They have every right to know about their own bodies" (174). Although the government is aware of the negative impact this bill can have on women's health, they refuse to discuss preventative options. This leaves women with few resources, which could result in an increased number of self-abortions. Sandy points out, "An estimated 850,000 women in Brazil have illegal abortions every year." In this way, Sanger's socialist feminist work has not been lost. She recognizes that "doctors and nurses, and social workers who were brought face to face with [the] overwhelming truth of women's needs and yet turned to pass on the other side" (174), and worked to provide preventative alternatives for poor and working class women. The measures that the Institution of Bioethics is working towards is continuing this work in current day Brazil.

The Brazilian government expects women to combat the virus in a way similar to what liberal feminist argued in terms of women's reproductive rights. Mann writes, "Most liberal feminists of this era only supported voluntary motherhood—or the right to abstain from sex with their husbands" (144). In Brazil, they have advised women to avoid pregnancy for the next two years, but offer no increased access to contraceptives or alternatives of abortion. As in Sanger's narrative, when women are denied alternatives to prevent pregnancy, women—especially racially/ethnically marginalized women and women in the poor and working class—resort to extremes such as self-abortion. Without access or knowledge of proper resources, women's health is endangered, and often their lives are lost due to ignorance and inaccessibility to safer alternatives. Here, the work of socialist feminist comes into play in working towards women's liberation through ending both economic and cultural sources of women's oppression.

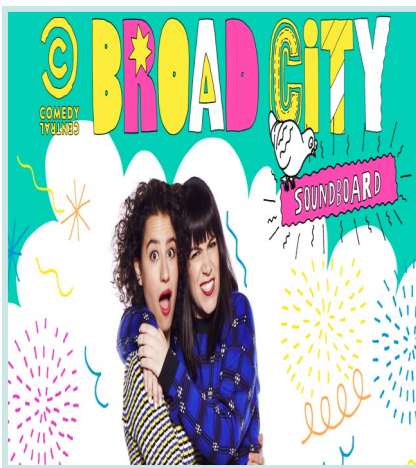
## #WhichHillary: Activists Respond to Hillary Clinton's White Feminism By Baheya Malaty (FGS '18)

At Hillary Clinton's most-recent lavish private fundraising event in South Carolina, Black Lives Matter activist Ashley Williams interrupted the event by holding up a sign which read, "We have to bring them to heel." The sign was a reference to a speech made by Clinton in 1994 in support of a crime bill that caused an astronomical increase in the mass incarceration of Brown and Black Americans. In support of that bill, Clinton referred to young people of color involved with gangs as "super predators." In the aftermath of Williams' direct action, the hashtag #WhichHillary has become a popular one for activists who seek to critique Clinton's campaign, which has championed itself as dedicated to the fulfillment of women's rights. Utilizing the frameworks introduced by Bushra Rehman and Daisy Hernandez in *Colonize This!: Young Women of Color on Today's Feminism* will illustrate the contradictions and hypocrisies of Clinton's brand of feminism, which she has used to great effect in her campaign.



Bushra and Hernandez write, "When the media vilifies a whole race, when a woman breaks the image of a model minority...or when our neighborhoods are being gentrified, this is... where our feminism lies" (378). Thus they articulate the concerns of young feminists of color who initially felt partially liberated by white feminism, but who also felt uncomfortable with and excluded by white feminist analyses and spaces. A tweeter with the username @erniesfo echoed this tension: "The Hillary Clinton who says she supports Latinos or the one who supports a coup in Honduras? #WhichHillary." Political commentator and journalist Ali Abunimah wrote, "#WhichHillary, the one who claims to be a lifelong child advocate or the one who never saw an Israeli massacre she didn't applaud?" Rehman and Hernandez can help illuminate the tension between Clinton's seemingly advocating progressive policies while simultaneously upholding oppressive ones.

For more of Baheya's analysis, scan the QR code or visit [www.femgeniuses.com](http://www.femgeniuses.com)!



## Broad City and the Implications of One-Dimensional Feminism By Amelia Eskenazi (FGS '19)

*Broad City*, a show about two Jewish girls in their mid-twenties living in New York City, has been heralded as a must watch television show for girls and women across the country. *Elle* has described *Broad City* as "pushing the boundaries," (Zemler) while *Bustle* described the show as "blatantly feminist" (Primeau). While the show does dispel many of the hyper-sexualized narratives within the media concerning women's sexuality, the extent of its feminism is very one-dimensional. I will be analyzing *Broad City* through the lens of transnational feminism, because to claim that *Broad City* is the ultimate example of feminism is to relegate any form of feminism other than liberal feminism into the background.

In "Two Chainz," one of the two main characters, Ilana, makes a xenophobic comment, claiming she is late because she read an article "about these Saudi women who have to ask their 'keepers' permission to leave the house...I was so pissed I had to blow off some steam and masturbate first." Many viewers fail to notice the xenophobic nature of the comment due to the overtly sex positive notion of masturbation at the end of the sentence [...] This cultural structure in Saudi Arabia is deemed oppressive in the eyes of a white urban woman with the assumption that Saudi Arabian women desire something different than theirs.

For more of Amelia's analysis, scan the QR code!



Scan the QR code for more of *The Monthly Rag*! Also, if you would like to submit to the *Block 8 Rag*, please email Editor Kadesha Caradine at [Kadesha.Caradine@coloradocollege.edu](mailto:Kadesha.Caradine@coloradocollege.edu) by **Friday, April 22 by 5 pm!**