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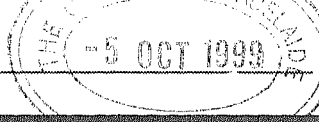
THE UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE
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ELLE



DIT





Elle Dit is the annual women's edition of the Students' Association of The University of Adelaide. The Editor has complete editorial control, although the opinions expressed are not necessarily her own.

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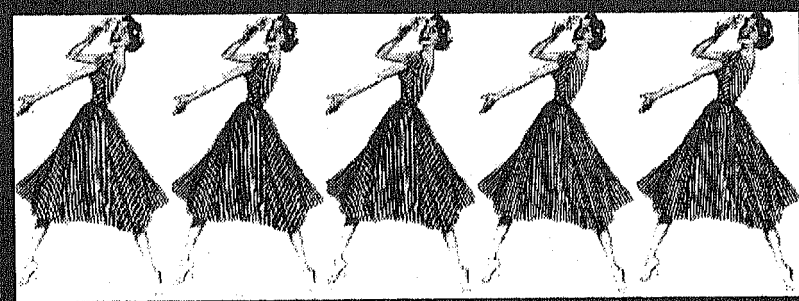


EDITORIAL

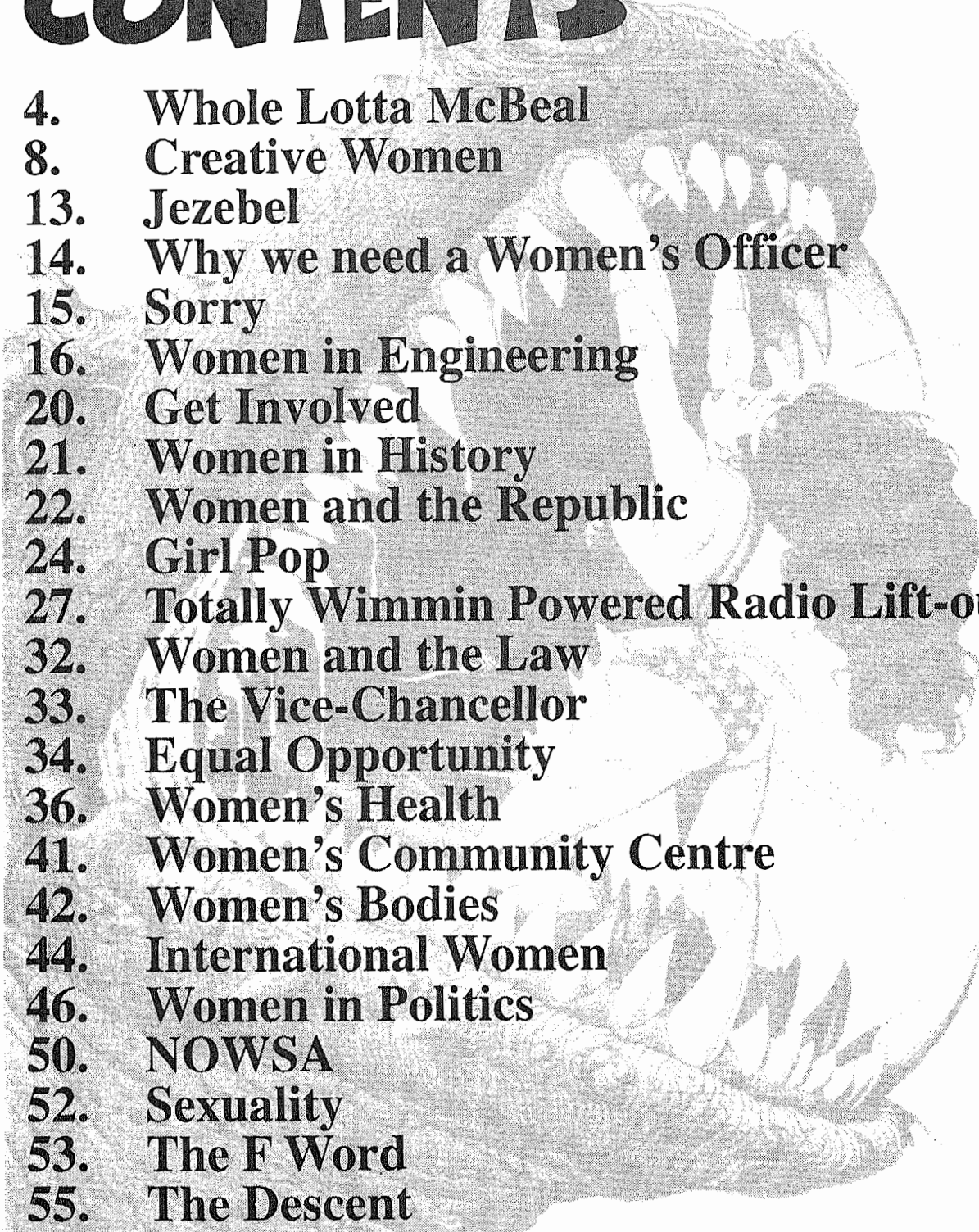
Welcome to the 1999 edition of *Elle Dit*, the women's edition of *On Dit*.

Elle Dit provides an open forum for the discussion of the issues affecting women, issues which are often not adequately represented in the mainstream media. It gives women an opportunity to explore ideas and express opinions without restriction. *Elle Dit* means different things to different people, so we have tried to include as diverse a range of articles as possible from women from all walks of life.

This is not intended to be a definitive survey of women's issues, but will go some way to redressing the imbalance between women's experience and women's representation in the media. On the eve of a new millennium, it is imperative that discussing women's issues continues to be on the agenda.



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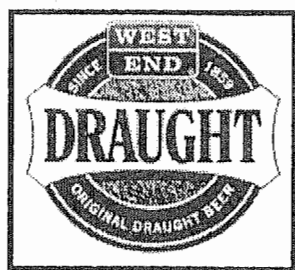
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I hate Ally McBeal. But hey, that's just me. What do I know? I feel embarrassed for her. She's a flake. She has a cushy job that requires more dramatic contemplation in the bathroom

than it does in the courtroom. I could probably stop this article right now, but for those of you who have yet to suffer the misfortune of encountering her, I'll explain why.

THE SHOW

The show *Ally McBeal* revolves around a bloody thin, Harvard-educated, funny-looking/pretty lawyer, whose success in the court room is diametrically opposite to the utter balls-up she's made of her love/sex life.

Under the pretence of being a show to do with lawyers and the law, *Ally McBeal* is in actuality a show about a girl and her love life.

WHY I WATCH HER

The dynamic I share with the show *Ally McBeal*, is similar to the one young kids share with eclipses. As soon as you tell them that looking at it will burn their retinas out, they have to. Similarly, while I know I'm becoming a worse person because of it, I still have to watch that damn fucking show every Monday night.

I don't watch *Ally McBeal* because I identify with her. She is the creation of some fucked up lawyer (David E. Kelley) who couldn't cut it in the real world. I watch the show because I enjoy hating her.

ALLY

Ally McBeal is an anorexic goldfish with the physique of an eight-year old boy. She often falls over and has a tendency to wear netball skirts to work. Somehow despite all of this she has become the so-called post-modern feminist icon of the 1990s. If this is true, all I can say is thank Christ the fucking

nineties are almost over!

WHY I HATE HER

I hate her because she's a selfish git. Her chasing after her married childhood sweetheart surely makes her morally culpable. She's too fragile to live without a roommate (or should that be without adult supervision). She's whiny, she's pathetic, she mopes, she pouts too fucking much. I hate her.

She's hardly a believable lawyer, and an even less believable adult. She's so sexually preoccupied, you'd half expect her office to be covered in posters of the Backstreet Boys and Ricky Martin (though with her frame she'd have no need to do aerobics to his music).

Last week Ally had a fantasy where Al Green (think sex scandals of the 1980s) appeared in her bedroom. While the fact that she looks like a child can lead you to think that David E. Kelley is sending out a somewhat dubious subliminal message to all his viewers, I won't go there. Suffice to say that standing up in court and beginning to dance and sing is enough for someone to say- you are a wacko.

That's the whole problem. Ally is completely fucking mental. Once while in the throes of fear at the idea of going out with a fat man, she pictured him in a car that toppled over due to his weight. The fact that she weighs as much as a bloody tim tam doesn't seem to offend her every time she looks in a mirror. Hell, starving people in Somalia must look at people like Ally and, oh I don't know... relate?

She injects references to her own fucked up love-life into almost every case she argues. Her closing arguments in court invariably allude to her need to find a boyfriend and reflect the emotional torment she is suffering at that moment in time. As such she is depicted as being unable to disassociate her professional and private lives from each other.

Women aren't like this. Not real ones anyway. Women who work hard to get educated and start the climb up the corporate ladder are dealt a great disservice

by characters like Ally McBeal, who rely on their short-hemlines and fluttery-eyed smiles to get anywhere. Guess what Ally, cuteness fades, varicose veins set in, and one day you'll actually have to rely on, oh I don't know... your brains perhaps?! What then, when your arguing a case against a cuter, blonder and younger version of yourself? You will be completely fucked! Good! You deserve it. Young women don't need ditsy role-models like you to emulate. Yes by the way, I am perfectly aware that she's a t.v character and not a feminist activist. My point is that make believe or not, her influence on society, and the expectations placed on females within it, is very real. Ally portrays the male dream kind of feminism, where women are superficially independent and strong within reason and all wrapped up in a sexy little package. She is an unmarried, twenty-something lawyer who manages to create the image that all women like this are idly passing time in some previously male-dominated profession (and making waves by just being there), while waiting for Mr Right to appear in all his yuppie splendor and rescue them to some huge, plush suburban home where they can procreate at will. She just needs a big, strong man to come to her rescue... all women do. Don't they?

Some argue that moments of weakness and the search for a soul-mate do not make a woman any less a feminist. I agree, it's just the package that her particular brand of insecurity is wrapped in. How can we seriously look towards people like this and label them feminist icons, just because they have law degrees, high-power jobs and high-power shoulder pads? She's against fat people, she doesn't seem to like lesbians (or maybe she just didn't like the one lesbian that was on the show, because she was fat!) She has an irrational faith in marriage and finding your one true love, especially given the vigour with which she tried to destroy another's marriage.

In one episode she said "If women really want to change society, they could do it. I plan to change society. I just want to get

McSpiel

married first'. Fuck off Ally. *Ally McBeal* appears to come from a point of view that women today have gone beyond feminism, such that they've come out the other side. To that end, its strong to be irrelevant, clever to be indecisive and brave to be a weak. She consults a husband-finding handbook called 'The Rules', she whinges after a subdued date: "I am a sexual object, for God's sake! He couldn't give me a little grope?" And when she is dumped by a guy, she whines "All I ever wanted was to be rich and successful and to have three kids and a husband who would wait at home to tickle my feet and look at me- I don't even like my hair (sob sob)!"

Ally once said "Sometimes I'm tempted to become a street person, cut off from society, but then, I wouldn't get to wear my outfits". What the hell kind of message is this supposed to send to females the world over. It reinforces in them the belief that education, professional success and financial security are nothing without the right bag and shoes.

Her stammering, clumsiness and hair-twisting cuteness stops viewers from having to take her seriously- it softens the ambitious career woman stuff that might put some people off. In fact next to Ally, strong, mature, decisive (and appropriately dressed) TV lawyers like Nelle Porter look chilly and bad-tempered (a barely hidden fact on *Ally McBeal*, where Nelle, the career-minded lawyer with no intention to ever have children is referred to as 'The Ice Queen').

A 1998 issue of Time magazine examined the evolution of feminism, and in doing so featured an image of Ally on its cover. The writer concluded that rather than crusading to break the glass ceiling, receive equal pay or receive decent childcare facilities, modern day feminists were self-obsessed, and far more concerned with body image, fashion and their sex lives. This is hardly an environment conducive to having women move forward towards achieving equality. Someone told me the other day that they'd heard *Ally McBeal* described as a triumph

of form over substance, and I believe this is an apt and fair conclusion to draw. The quirky language, sorry, 'witty repartee' and 'clever' computer animation draw away from the fact that at the heart of this series is a seriously selfish, flighty, maladjusted lawyer who needs to get her head out of her own arse.

THE PERIPHERIES

The Unisex- I don't know about you guys but my parents aren't that rich. Our bathroom at home is- wait for it... UNISEX! So what's so fucking amazing about having a toilet that is so compatible that both sexes are able to use that damn thing? Unlike at Adelaide Uni, there seems to be a distinct lack of paraphernalia regarding abortion upon the cubicle walls, but then again surely most career-minded girls would quit their jobs in a second to have a baby. Wouldn't they?

Ling Woo- while it won't surprise many to find that I actually relate to her, I do. She is a stand up woman who doesn't take any shit from anyone. She owns an escort agency and a mud-wrestling club (as these enterprises somehow exploit men it seems). She sued God for 'inflicting' cancer upon a child, she doesn't like sex (she thinks it's messy) and yet like all tough women, she has a heart of gold.

Nelle c' 'The Ice Queen' Porter- has just fallen in love with John "The Biscuit" Cage - the single weirdest and least attractive male on the face of the earth (next to the AusVac guy with the comb-over). Isn't it reassuring to note that 'The Ice Queen' has a heart. Oh well, at least ugly men the world over can continue watching the show in the ridiculous hope that a woman as strong and good-looking as Nelle will fall for them too. John "The Biscuit" Cage- is a scared, weird, little guy. He is the aforementioned ugly male. His smile therapy is frightening, he starts talking in tongues when he is flustered, and perhaps unsurprisingly, he is the only one who understands and relates to Ally's mental state. His theme song is by Barry White, he has to take 'moments' and he leaves toilet cubicles by

'dismounting' them like a gymnast. Yes, this is the sort of man who can make a strong, career-minded girl's heart melt.

Richard Fish- epitomises all that females fear and suspect of the opposite sex. That they are only interested in two things: money and sex. He believes that he can say and do anything at all, and excuse it away with the utterance of the single word 'by-gone'. What the fuck is a by-gone? There is no such thing. I think that really says it all about Richard Fish.

Billy Thomas- is a twit, a twat and a git all in one. He is a boring wanker, who Ally should have just left in the past. He's fluffy wallpaper, who encourages Ally every step of the way in her never-ending quest to break up his marriage. He is basically the reason why she is mental; another example of a man screwing up a woman's life (although he gets extra credit- he almost screwed up two in one shot).

Georgia Thomas- she's pushed Ally in an attempt to help get rid of one of her many unsuitable suitors. Apparently this worked, but isn't this many men's ultimate fantasy- watching two women going for it? Or is it just David E. Kelley's?

Elaine Vassel- I actually like her, because although she's a stupid, eavesdropping slut with few scruples, not only does know this about herself, she revels in it.

Renee- together with Ling she makes the show p.c, as all the major minorities are thus included in the cast. She enables Ally to enjoy having a pyjama party everynight (even if they are both supposed to be adults), while also acting as her guardian; the person who would sign the consent form if Ally were to go on camp.

That Woman Who Sings in the Bar- shut the fuck up please. I'm sick of Ally's life having a damn soundtrack.

Tanisha Hewanpola



Fox on the Box

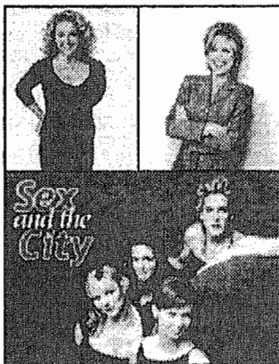
Why is it the Channel Seven's *Ally McBeal* is so popular? In this enlightened age, why is it that millions of people tune in to watch and intelligent, (mostly) articulate, successful woman emotionally beat herself up for an hour every week? This program and other texts like it have provoked heated debate in homes, workplaces, dinner parties and classrooms everywhere.

Is it that women feel more confident or secure in their own selves when they see someone whose insecurities and fears are even more pathetic than they see themselves? I know that for every hopelessly romantic impulse I may have, *Ally* can top me and then some. For all that 'there's someone out there for me' narrative, there exists an equally strong line of common sense. Education teaches us what we have been taught through social and cultural mechanisms. Why is it that women are called 'sluts' while men are called 'studs'? Why the understanding that the double standard must exist? And why are women indoctrinated with the idea that 'true love' must exist that they need to find Him or better yet, be found by Him? Stories like *Cinderella* and *Snow White* teach us from the outset that we need to be rescued.

This is what *Ally McBeal* preaches. But what is different is that we no longer live in an age when celluloid role models are *Carol Brady* and *Doris Day*. We know that there are choices and that men are not necessary to be a complete and whole woman. By no means am I advocating that we dispense with partnership - I believe that human beings were designed to be social creatures - but I do protest the idea that women need men (and thus, by implication,

babies) to be whole.

A new program on Australian television, Channel Nine's *Sex in the City*, also raises many of the same issues, even more blatantly than *Ally*. In this program, four women all seek happiness but seek it through men. In the first episode, we explore the notion of women having sex like men - that is, without emotion and no



strings attached. We are told that women can do it but it leaves them unsatisfied whilst it seems to gratify men. This program continually reinforces the idea that women won't be happy with alternative to tradition and that we should stick to the fairytale fantasy because ultimately, it's all that will satisfy us. Thanks but no thanks.

Likewise, a male friend of mine was angered by this program and the image of men that it portrayed. He was upset by the portrayal of men as serial one-night standers and that they want to shag a different woman every night of the week. He was also really annoyed at the reaction it provokes, that is, 'I can have sex like a man if I want to', because as a result of this portrayal of men, he felt that women will actually believe that all men are prone to play serial sexual musical chairs.

Ally McBeal does offer a big, fat ray of hope in the shape of the character

Ling. Ling is perhaps the one of the most revolutionary female characters on television today. Here is a strong, independent (both financially and emotionally), outspoken and unyielding character that tells us that we needn't spend our days worrying about what will happen, but rather make what you want to happen, happen! Ling's callousness speaks some profound insights. She calls the penis 'the dumbstick'. With this simple term, she infers that men are not privileged to be endowed with a phallus but rather hamstrung. Ling is strong because she is not a man, not despite this fact. She is therefore not disabled by having a penis that makes everything revolve around sex and the quest for it. Likewise, Ling's refusal to be reduced to simply a sex object for men demonstrates her superb ability to exploit the way in which men react to women, particularly beautiful ones.

So with one hand *Ally McBeal* giveth and yet with the other it taketh away. This program, as with several other like texts, such as *Briget Jones's Diary* by Helen Fielding and *Does My Bum Look Big in This?* By Arabella Weir, have the effect of making me want to sit these poor creatures down and shake them by their poor alternatively skinny or overpadded shoulders and tell them to get a grip on their minds! Far, far too long have women and men been told what our inevitable roles in life must be. Why, at the close of this millennium, must we continually buy into the idea that in order to be successful, we must be partnered and positioned in to predetermined roles? Please don't mistake my words - I don't condemn partnership but simply ask that we ask questions about what and how we want to be.

The Woman in Ally's Life

If you, like me, are a sucker for trash TV, you may have lately had an Ally McBeal experience.

Never has a show been given more shit by more people (*On Dit* included), but that aside, I propose that the fatal flaw of Ally McBeal is that Ally is a part of it. But while the snivelly whiney little brat moans on and on about never finding love (conveniently ignoring the fact that she just cheated on an incredibly hot Doctor boyfriend with that wanker Billy), the definitive modern chick has been emerging from the woodwork and is making Ally superfluous in her own show LING! If women must take their mentors from modern day TV, then Ling is our lady. Yes, she is a bitch (after all, this is America). When Ling is coming up the elevator to the offices of Cage and Fish, Wicked Witch of West music sounds

and all the women in the office start feeling nauseous. When someone dare answer her back, she snarls. Literally.

I know when Ling first arrived, she annoyed the living shit out of me. But over time I have been converted.

Because Ling has more balls than all the male characters on the show put together, because she can make the most utterly crappy McBealesque legal concept sound believable and because (with much satisfaction), kicks Ally's butt in almost every conceivable way.

Contrasted to the other characters working in the 'law firm' on the show can only cement my point:

Ally: need I say more.

Richard himbo with a penchant for one liners. Proud chauvinist and for some reason is founding partner even though he is incapable of arguing in

court and has never been seen doing any work.

John 'The Biscuit' psychotic, neurotic weirdo who, like Ally, is a psychological study in his own right. I won't even go into the smile therapy.

Nelle appears to be sane but must be a bit off-kilter because she's currently



sleeping with John. Scores **points** for being Ling's best friend though.

Billy really has no idea about anything. The official dickhead character of the show.

Georgia (a.k.a. Alison from Melrose) - married to Billy. Worse still, stayed married to Billy even after he cheated on her with Ally. ALLY! Idiot.

Janc- doing women's reputation all sorts of favours by being a proud slut. I'm not joking as she has actually come out and said this.

In short, no one even compares. And Ling is left carrying the mantle for strong, independent women everywhere.

Firstly, Ling is a lawyer, a good one, so good she even got hired purely by her own powers of manipulation. Secondly, Ling is an entrepreneur. So far she owns a steel manufacturing plant, a mud wrestling club, a male escort service, designs her own

clothes and in one episode was a miracle working hairdresser. She has independent wealth. She's the only one who isn't taking the 'law' firm seriously and doing things her way. This chick believes that she can have anything. She believes in herself and her own ability to succeed and she has. She is not afraid to say exactly what she thinks and stands up for herself. In truth, she does girl power better than any Spicey. When it comes to men, Ling has it all underfist. She is, by her own proclamation, the best sex any guy has ever had. I kid you not. So good, that even saying 'sex' seems to set every person within a 5km radius turned on. Furthermore, she made Richard Fish, a 30-something year old who is ruled entirely by his dumbstick, wait six months before she would sleep with him! We all know men so let's face it - that's quite an achievement.

Ling gets her own way. She's always in control. She is ruled totally by her own self belief. She's stunning, beautiful and she can even swing dance.

The cynics out there would remind you that Ling is a fictional character on a TV show (an American TV show at that). But women of the world are blessed that finally a nineties chick has emerged from the dark and mysterious depths of prime time television.

So if you watch Ally McBeal for no other reason, watch it to see Ling in action. So it's TV but after watching it you will be able to punch out any guy who has ever treated you like shit, win every argument, quit Uni, quit your shithouse job, go off on a totally bizarre career ambition you might secretly harbour and for no bad reason, feel that you, like I me, can have it all.

our once a year, fantasy,

(throw your alice in wonderland to the wind...)

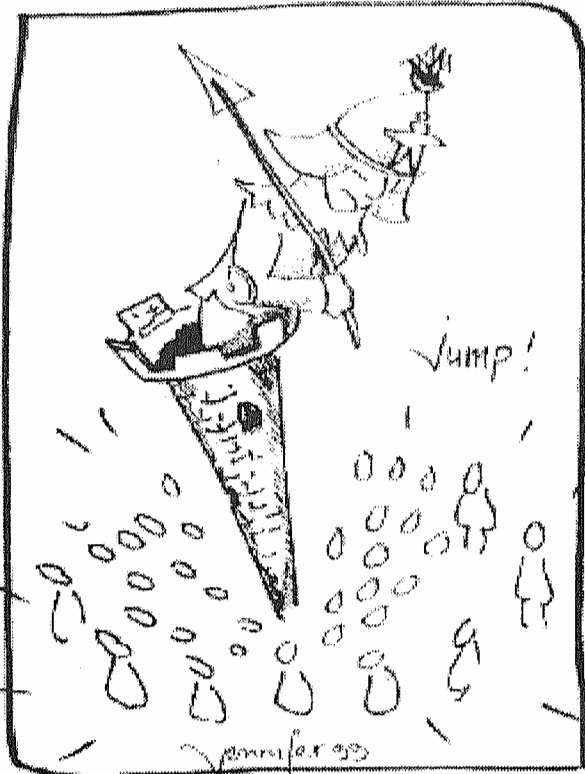
-it's time to rejoice the many-

if you missed the elle dit party, don't panic
the word is -feminists are out there - gathering
(not always by night, re-enacting
sacred bra-burning rites)
but in broad daylight - laughing, sharing stories
withstanding a cult torture -
of mass produced bondage.

-and i heard it whispered-

if ever you are silenced by the Towers of
Academia and the blind domination of
thought by the masculine 'universal' l...

-rewrite the script-

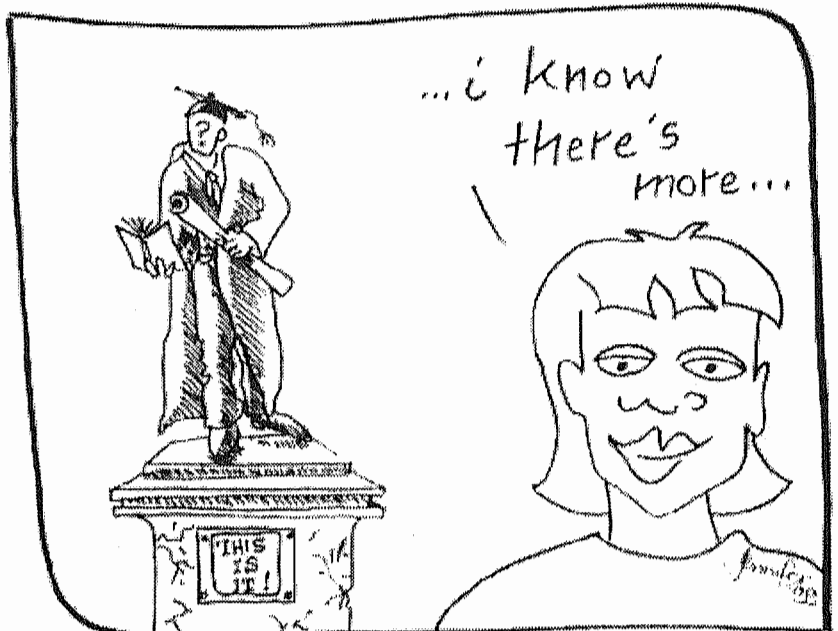


... waiting for night to fall ...

-rewrite the script-

don't accept see no evil

... 'see' him ...
and raise the
stakes...



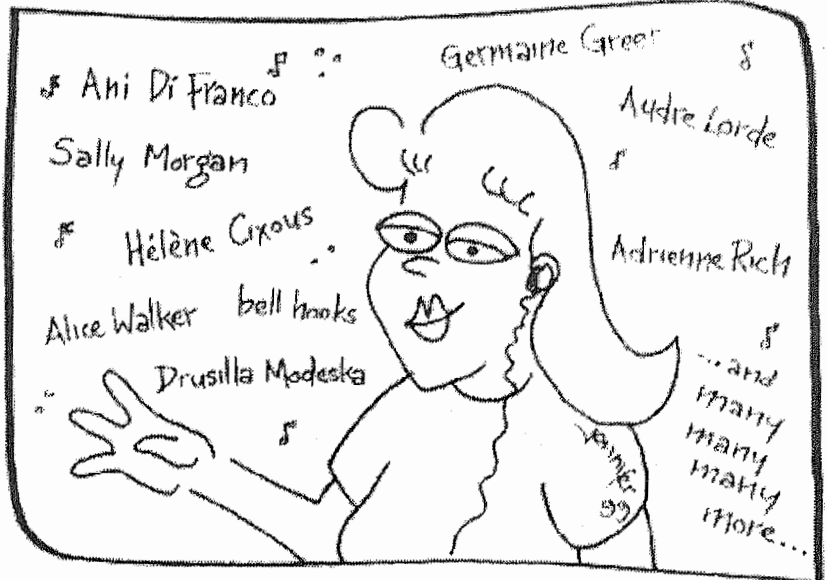
eLLeS Dit, trip of a lifetime!

-rewrite
the script-

don't accept hear no evil

listen to your own
'songs'

- he can't lecture you



-rewrite
the script-

don't accept speak no evil

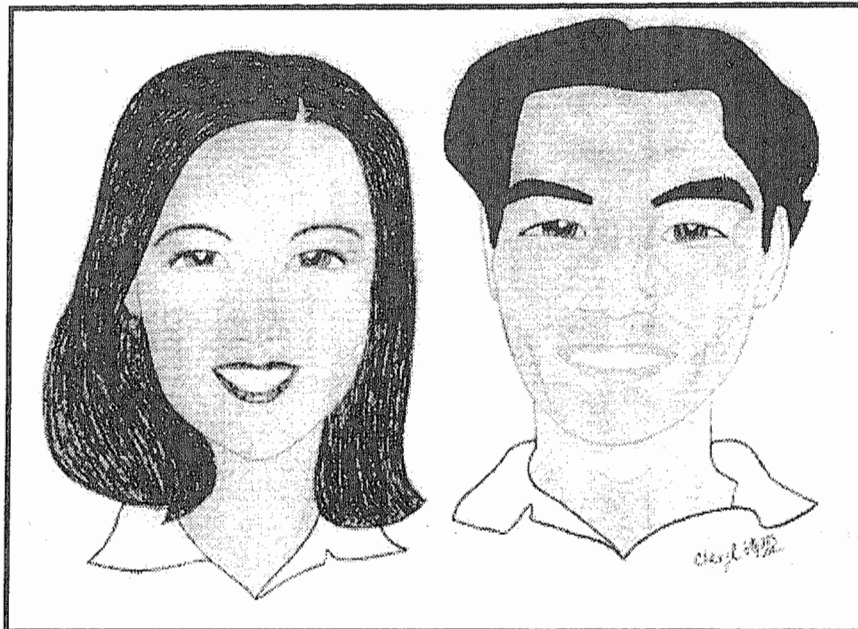
...eat the apple
of his eye...

...why not grow your own tree
of knowledge and eat the lot



Virtual or Reality? Part II, The Final Chapter..

Greetings everyone. If you remember, I wrote the same article last year in *Elle Dit*. But, if you don't, I'll refresh your mind. Last year, I got to know two guys at one time. One can be considered as a close friend and the other one from my cyberspace chat world. The thing was, I like both of them. I've known my close friend from high school and he approached me several times but



Finally, I made my decision to choose him because he's everything I ever wished for in a man. Kind, understanding, loving, caring and the list goes on and on. Everything about him to me seemed perfect. As the saying goes "Beauty come from the eyes of the beholder" is definitely true. Life has never been so kind to me and I made the right decision and who

I managed to put him off everytime because I don't want to ruin our friendship (but I never discard the possibility that there might be something more to our friendship). Anyway, at the same time I met a guy in cyberspace and like him a lot. He's very charming and the thought that he might be the one often occurred to me. But there's a setback, I've never met him. The deal is that I wanted to meet him for the first time when I go back home during summer holidays. It was my plan, at least I thought it was until something totally unexpected happened to me. It happened to me about a couple of months before I went home for the holidays. It totally blew me away! It changed my whole life and I still can't believe it happened so quickly. I'm not kidding here, I know you guys are dying to know what happened to me and which of those two guys that I choose? I'll tell you one thing for sure, I went back home but I never met my cyberspace

boyfriend or my close friend. So, that's the end for the both of them. You must be asking why? No, they didn't dump me or something like that, I didn't want to see them. So, what's actually happened to my love life, you must be wondering? Let me tell you what happened. At that time, I was shopping around looking for something and minding my own business. Then a guy came up to me and flashed a smile. I smiled back as a form of courtesy and another thing was this guy was very handsome. At first I was being aware of him, people here are very friendly though and I am trying to be friendly. We started talking about stuff and introduced each other. And before I knew it, we started going out and meeting each other more. I can say that it was definitely a whirlwind romance for me. I never thought that I could ever find that Mr Right at all since I haven't been very much lucky in my love life. I guess Mr Cupid finally struck me with his arrow.

knows what's going to happen next? But I know one thing for sure, I can stop searching for that one person because I've already found him and I've never been so happy in my whole life. So, before I end my short story this time, I'd like to tell all you girls out there that never give up on searching for that Mr Right. Although at some times he seemed like Mr Wrong, but look deep inside yourself and you'll see that he might be the one for you. Don't stop hoping and wishing but if he never comes, don't give up. Cupid has his own way of making your dreams come true, just like how he did to me. And you'll find happiness no matter whom you with. He may not look like Tom Cruise or Brad Pitt, but he's definitely yours forever to hold and to love. To finish up, enjoy life as much as you can and don't forget your studies too!

Winnie P

Waiting

The sweet-tipped rage of my frustration washes over me like sour juice

I burn and scald inside, smoking to be in your presence and have

Your murky eyes wash over me tantalisingly once again

I writhe in restrained agony at the impossibility of our union

Yet glow like a mandarin sunset because I keep my ear to the ground

And know that one day our bashful paths will cross again in fireworks splendour

So often have I felt this way

So often have I felt this way

In years gone by, to childhood days.

When whispers spoke a fair maiden's name,

And loves were fickle and brief forays.

Yet each lost love still seemed to wield

A pain which forced my heart to yield.

A pain, alas, I know too well.

And every time it's barely healed,

When another angel catches my eye.

And 'tis to no avail how hard I try,

to cling to sense and lessons learnt.

Though I know my love is doomed to die.

So often have I felt this way.

Yet I cannot make it go away.

And when I saw her I must confess,

I felt that way again today.

Musings of a Coffee Addict

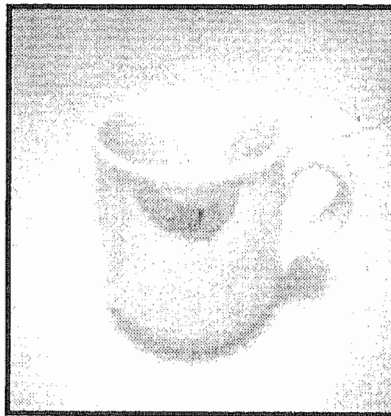
She woke up with a start. Again, she had fallen asleep during a lecture. She didn't mean to. It's just that she was so tired. So tired. Stay awake, dammit. Another cup of coffee. Maybe two. Black. That should be enough to get her through the morning. She wondered if they had fixed the coffee vending machine down the hall. The thought of vending machines made her stomach rumble. She'd probably have to eat sometime soon. She thought of the 6 pieces of Vita-wheat she had in her bag for lunch. In total, 3 grams of fat. No, there was no way she was eating before lunch. Besides, if she waited long enough, the hunger would pass. She might even be able to stave off her hunger until tea. After all, 3 grams of fat. It was a bit much.

God, was the lecturer still talking? Better take some notes. Her friends were looking her over. They were gonna give her shit. "You shouldn't have gone out", they'd say. They'd point out that coming to uni with a hangover would not be a good idea. As if she had a hangover. She was quite capable of having a good time without alcohol, thank you very much.

Well, maybe she had had a little too much to drink last night. But she only started drinking because everyone else was. Besides, no one would talk to her if she wasn't holding something alcoholic. And she was addicted to something more potent than alcohol. She needed people to talk to her.

God, she was hungry. But it was only 9:30. Maybe if she had one Vita-Wheat after the lecture her stomach would shut up: no, better yet, she'd guzzle down some water. Water had no calories. There was no way she could afford to end up like her sister: 5 kilos overweight and no boyfriend. No friends, actually. The only people at her sister's 21st were their parents. Even she couldn't be bothered attending the dinner. She tried to avoid being associated with her sister. It

tarnished her image. Anyway, if she stuck to this food plan, she'd never be like her sister. She'd have to find something to eat with less fat: maybe a carrot or celery stick. Mental note, look into the fat content of carrots. He had a photo of that really skinny chick from that crap TV show in his folder. Bitch. Well, if he wasn't going to talk to her until she was a waif, she'd just have to lose some weight. It wasn't as if she was doing this just for him if she lost enough weight, more people would talk



to her. And she craved attention. Her aim was to be associated with those chicks that everyone knew. She was trying her best she had cut her hair the same way and started shopping at the same stores. If she just lost a bit more weight, she'd be one of them. Everyone talked to them.

She wrote up a mental list of what she still had to do:
lose more weight: all those girls were at least ten kilos lighter than she was
get the clothes: after all, no one would talk to her if she looked like a dog
get a boyfriend or, at least, sleep with one of the 'acceptable' guys
Then she'd get the attention she deserved. She'd take the limelight away from those 'I'm better than you' anorexic bitches. She thought back to the night before.

Going to the pub had not been one of the smartest things she had done. She woke up that morning with no recollection of how she had gotten home. Probably a cab. She hoped. The implications of having gotten home any other way were too scary to think about. Oh well, at least she had made sure that people knew her. Not that she was really sure about what they knew about her and what she had done that night: she was so drunk. She couldn't even remember how much she had had to drink, guys just kept buying her drinks. Combine that with the thrill of being talked to and it was like she had mixed drugs and alcohol. She went all stupid and continued drinking way past her limit without her realizing it. Not that she regretted it too much. If she hadn't continued accepting the drinks, she would have been branded as a prude. No one would have talked to her. Worse, they would have talked about her. And that wasn't the kind of popularity she wanted. Anyway, forget about last night. Hell, once she was one of them, she wouldn't even need alcohol. People would kill to be associated with her. But for now, people wouldn't talk to her otherwise.

Her friends were worried that she was 'drowning her sorrows in alcohol' and they wanted to 'save her from herself'. They had no clue. They lived in a little dream-world where alcohol and diets were evil and where people 'accepted you for what you are inside and not what you look like'. The idiots. She was smart. She knew better. She knew that she had to outwardly mould herself into what other people wanted her to be. Only then would she be accepted. Only then would she be popular. Dammit, when was this lecture going to end? She needed coffee. She was so tired.

Anna Lizelle S. Tan

Jezebel

**Jezebel, having heard what happened,
put on eye shadow, arranged her hair,
and stood looking down at the street
from the window in the palace.
The Second Book of Kings, Chapter 9,
Verse 30**

As in most stories in the Bible the death of Jezebel is remarkable for her silence - she speaks rarely and is always described in the third person. In more puritan times when only prostitutes wore make up (think Scarlett O'Hara pinching her cheeks) Jezebel's attention to her appearance indicated her natural depravity. Her very name has come to be associated with sexually indiscriminate women. Once when discussing names we liked I nominated Jezebel a beautiful name a friend asked me why I didn't just use slut and be done with it.

However, what grips me about this story is the fleeting detail of Jezebel's makeup. Obviously we are long way from considering make up as a sign of evil but how do we use and interpret it today? In the novel *Skinny Legs and All* Tom Robbins addresses the issue of Jezebel's darkened eyelids "Was it implied that she went to the window to flirt with the rebel warrior? And if so, was that so wicked that it should wreck her reputation for three thousand years?" (p 29) Robbins identifies differences in religion and gender identity as the basis of the charges against Jezebel. Jezebel worshipped the goddess Astarte, a female figure found in most religions and cultures: "She was virgin, bride, mother, prostitute, witch, and hanging judge all rolled into one. She knew the dark side of the moon like the palm of her hand." (p 44) Worship of the Goddess is more sensual and indulgent than that of a male and patriarchal God "because her warm feminine intuition was often at odds with cool masculine reason, because the uterine magic of her daughters has since the dawn of con-

sciousness overshadowed the penis power of her sons, resentful priests of a tribe of nomadic Hebrews led a coup against her some four thousand years ago." (p 44)

Robbins places a definitive spin on Jezebel's attention to her toilette; "When the moment arrived, Jezebel was



thoroughly aware she was about to be assassinated. She put up her ergot-black hair, donned her tiara, rouged her cheeks and lips, applied kohl to the lids of her huge Phoenician eyes, and went to face her killer with the style, dignity and grace befitting a reigning queen." (p 46) Robbins' Jezebel is strong, powerful and composed. Her makeup is a signal of her disdain for her murderer and makes her a striking figure despite her messy death. Make up remains important in our culture. Many women refuse to leave the house without it and comes to be seen as an innate part of femininity. It becomes a mask, a form of protection and, as in the story of Jezebel, a sign of power. We read it as part of our souls, as an indicator of our personalities. A

recent article in *The Weekend Australian* mentions celebrities from Venus and St Teresa of Avila to Nicole Kidman and Kate Winslet to show the seductive power of lipstick and its ability to emphasise your personality and redeem our memories of ourselves. "As the young woman's first agent of cosmetic transformation, it wields almost archetypal power. Within the simple tube of beeswax, dye and emollients is her secret identity." (Sept 4-5, p 44) With a tube of suitably named dye we can align ourselves with other's beauty and lifestyle (as in the case of celebrity endorsements) or distance ourselves from facets of our character we may not like. Paloma Picasso explains her change from her signature red mouth as reaching a new level of comfort where she no longer needed the protection of an immaculately made up mask. Yet, the flip side of this view is the use of makeup and feminine appearance as a form of suppression and oppression. Obviously I am only speaking for myself here but it occurs to me that I don't really need it. I see many girls who seem to get along fine without it and look great. It worries me that I am so easily manipulated; that I crave the latest colours and that I can veil that as emancipation. Even in simple financial terms the amount of money I spend on cosmetics is ridiculous, especially when compared to the cost of cosmetics for men (if they choose to use them). This is not restricted to cleansers or moisturisers but is also seen in the price difference between perfumes, on average, \$70 for guys, \$120 for girls. I can never find a resolution for this dilemma I don't want to stop wearing makeup nor do I want to start using Bilo brand. Is it part of my soul? I don't think so. Do I enjoy it? You bet.

Ilze Teteris

Why a Women's Officer?

As Women's Officer I hear people commenting as to why there is a need for a Women's officer on campus. The creation of the position of Women's Officer is a structural and political step which acknowledges that women have historically faced, and continue to face, specific gender related problems on campus. These issues include sexual harassment and assault, security on campus, access to child care and family responsibilities, women's involvement in non-traditional areas of study, and the lack of representation of women in postgraduate research and academic positions.

The Women's Officer is there to liaise with on campus women's groups, organise campaigns and produce information on issues that affect women, act as a link and reporting mechanism between the student

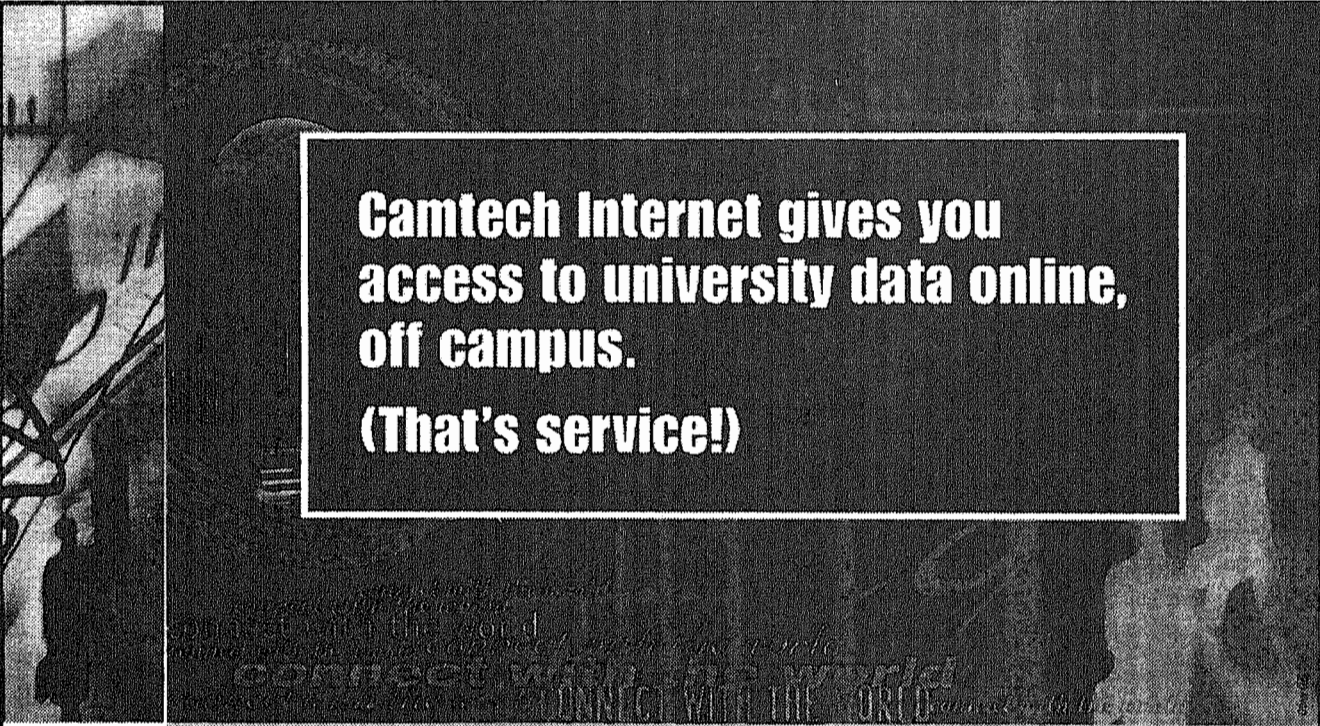
organisation and women's groups, deal with sexual harassment or sex discrimination complaints, represent and voice women students' concerns, ensure that all publications and events on campus are non sexist, and be involved with the publication of the women's edition of the student newspaper, *Elle Dit*.

Another important point about the position of the Women's Officer is the necessity for the position to be held by a woman. This is because women understand the problems which other women face and can share common experiences. Women students find it easier to talk about problems such as sexual harassment, contraception, sexuality or health issues with other women. It would not be suitable to have a man representing women in the position of Women's Officer as he would be unable to

cater for or understand the needs and issues women face. In a society where power ultimately resides in men, a male Women's Officer would merely be another way in which men speak for women and stop their voices from being heard.

The recognition of autonomous women's organising both on and off campus and a Women's Officer are important ways in which the above restrictions upon women can be addressed, and therefore working to challenge and change them. So as long as women still face sexual harassment and assault, as long as they are still afraid to walk the streets at night, and as long as they still face barriers to education, we need Women's Officer's and we need to maintain support for them.

Eileen Fisher



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To all Nunga women who are and who have ever been,

Sorry

I want to say sorry for all the atrocities that were and still are directed at you and your own. I say sorry for the pain, terror and destruction that some of my people have subjected you to. I apologise to you for those of my people who have looked on and said nothing while your cultural, social and ecological beliefs were ridiculed and all but destroyed.

To all you Nunga mothers I cannot begin to understand the horror and pain you have suffered at my people's hands, but i do know how much I love my children and wish them no harm.

To all you Nunga daughters, I have been through many types of abuse because adults decided my fate. Sexual, physical and psychological abuse all cause pain and turmoil, and many children are subjected to such abuse, but what horror when one is terrorised totally as one is Nunga. I feel your pain, but not why you were so treated.

I want to say sorry, not to ask you to forgive me but rather to ask you to tell me what to do.

Nancy White

I'm Just A Girl...

One of the clearest memories that I have of first year was a tutor commenting as a girl left the room: "she'd look great in leather". It was at that point I realised that I was the only girl in the room and that no-one was about to say anything. So neither did I (Second year Engineering Student). To be a woman in an engineering degree is much like being a migrant in a foreign country. Just as highly qualified migrants are enticed, so female secondary school students are actively pursued by the engineering faculties. And, like the migrant entering their new country fifty years ago, aspiring female engineers are confronted with a totally foreign culture, and expected to assimilate.

Engineering has its roots in the longstanding conservative traditions of the profession and unlike other disciplines, this culture appears to have largely withstood the influence of the feminist movement. Engineering students have a reputation for

scorning other degrees and for forming a strong and distinct community of their own.

Over the last ten years and particularly more recently, the culture of engineering has been critiqued by a number of researchers who have described it as exclusive, sexist, homophobic, hierarchical, and displaying the most excessive features of dominant masculinity, a 'boys' club'.

At Adelaide University, females make up only 16% of those studying engineering. We enter an environment of pubescent males, supported by the presence of an almost all male teaching staff. Like any minority group, female students experience the pressure to conform. This is difficult for women in engineering as the dominant culture is male and, to put it simply, WE ARE NOT.

Within this masculine world, there are several roles prescribed for women. Engineering culture will let us be women, but not engineers, or engineers but not women. As a coping strategy, women often take on foreign persona. In both our own experience and that of other researchers, there are three distinct roles.

The first of these is the pseudo-boy. This embodies the if you can't beat 'em, join 'em philosophy. In order to be taken seriously as an engineer, many women feel that they must disown their femininity. They simply do not relate to people as women. By doing so, they gain a form of respect from the male students, but they are still regarded as outsiders.

At the other end of the spectrum, many female students



become ultra-feminine. This earns them the chivalrous quasi-respect of the male students, but as engineers they are not given credibility. They are the gossips, the flirts, the lipstick-wearers who wait for doors to be opened for them.

Finally, women often attempt to deny the realities of the dominant culture. The fear of being seen as victims, or needing extra help to get through compels these women to promote engineering as unproblematic, which invalidates the experiences of the other female students, and increases the isolation of individual women in engineering. Engineering can be an intensely lonely experience, not just for women, but also for men, as the culture prescribes distinct roles for each gender.

You walk up to a table [of boys] and there is silence and you ask yourself "did I say something?" (Female engineering student).



I feel almost like gyped because when we were at school we were told, "oh engineering's this wonderful thing for girls to do and you get to work with all the guys and like dismantle pumps and stuff", but they don't really tell you what it's like. You don't get to go in and watch what these guys are really like. They never tell you. (Female engineering student)

The gender imbalance within engineering is no secret. Even in this post-feminist era, engineering faculties struggle to maintain female enrolments at a level that barely approaches respectability. In order to gain even this small number, they must actively solicit girls at secondary school with promises of engineering as it should be. I'm adaptable, inquiring, creative, a problem-solver, imaginative, decision-maker, dynamic, resourceful, analytical, inventive, a people person: I'm an engineer (University of Adelaide, 1995).

Broken Promises

And so, seventeen and eighteen year-old girls are charmed into an engineering degree. Once there, however, the slogans of these advertisements, and the concepts they express, are not valued. Without the support of female staff, without any recognition that these students have entered engineering with the expectation of it honouring these promises, without any explanation for this, female students are left standing alone in a male-dominated environment that blames them for making the assumption that engineering would be the way it was advertised. One commonly reported complaint by female students is that they continually get given roles of less importance:

"They [male engineering students] would give us female engineering students/ pissy jobs -they would give us transcribing, they would give us spell-checking... they would always give you inferior work (Female engineering student)

This can have a profound affect on female students' behaviour: "Her attitude actually changed. She became totally subservient. She bought herself a \$5000 computer so she fitted in. She would do everything for them you know, if they wanted something done straightaway." (Female engineering student)

It's more than just embarrassing statistics. As Australians, we're being ripped off by our engineering educators because they are actively discouraging diversity of thought and approach. Engineering is

fundamentally about finding the best solution for a specific problem. about lateral thinking, a creative response. A reduction in diversity decreases the chances of finding that best solution. In this economically competitive environment, Australia needs to maintain its smart edge in order to survive. We simply cannot afford to ignore the possible solutions and new ideas generated by one half of our population. Women have a unique perspective and often a very different style of working, and to waste this would be unforgivable.

Heidi Ryan and Erin O'Donnell

These are modifications of two papers that the authors will be presenting at the Women in Engineering Conference, part of the 11th Annual Australasian Engineering Education Conference in late September. The papers will appear in full in the proceedings of this conference. If any interested engineering students would like to attend, the Engineering Faculty is offering to provide some sponsorship. Sign up at the Faculty Office ASAP.

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Female engineering students:

In my position as a student equity officer at this university over the last five years, I have spent a great deal of time looking at how the engineering faculty can become more inclusive of the diversity of students now studying engineering. This process has involved me and my colleagues speaking and meeting with many engineering students, both male and female, conducting recorded interviews with over 100 students and writing extensively about gender and diversity issues in engineering.

A significant number of female engineering students I've met over this period have talked about or indicated their discomfort with the notion that they are 'disadvantaged' in the male dominated environment of the engineering faculty. These students have expressed the view that they do not support any special measures specifically targeted at women because such measures have an underlying assumption that female engineering students need special help to get through. To these students, special measures imply that they are not good enough to get through on their own. Furthermore, these students have indicated (quite correctly) that special measures for female students result in a strong backlash from some male students. For example, the notion of a 'women's room' attracts a backlash from male students (despite the fact that the male students concede that if a men's room was provided, they would not use it). Whilst I am of the view that the engineering faculty fails to provide an equitable educational or social environment for many female



students or for other students who are what I call 'non-traditional' engineering students, I do agree that the whole notion of special measures needs to be looked at and rethought. I believe that there is a way of conceptualising the experiences of women in engineering without constituting women as 'victims'. I am well aware of the discomfort which some female engineering students feel about what they see as 'feminist' issues. But this discomfort doesn't mean that female students should accept an educational experience which fails to cater for, or value a diverse group of students. Regardless of your views on feminism, as a female engineering student, you have the right to study in an environment:

which is free from unwelcome sexualised behaviour or comments of any form. This includes unwelcome sexualised joking, put downs, emails, pin ups, references to your sex life, your mode of dress or your sexuality, where you can be yourself and don't feel that you have to dress down to blend in or to be 'one of the boys', where you don't have to be the only female in a group involved in a group work project if you don't want to be, where staff respond quickly and appropriately to any concerns you have about the educational or social environment of engineering and where you are not subjected to negative repercussions from students or staff as a result of making a complaint, where the curriculum reflects the diversity of backgrounds and experiences of students now studying engineering rather than just those of the dominant group, where social activities reflect the diverse interests of all students,

not just those who are part of the dominant group or who are more vocal.

Over the years, I have met some very gutsy, strong, intelligent, passionate female engineering students who whilst being critical of their experiences in engineering, do not view themselves as victims. Far from it. These students recognise the ways in which the engineering faculty fails to provide an equitable learning environment and they have challenged the faculty in various ways over this failure. Far from being victims, they are prepared to stand up and be counted and to make it known that they will not accept second best. I have also met some male engineering students who are prepared to stand

challenging the notion of 'victim'


out from the crowd and acknowledge that engineering culture is uncomfortable for many women, for some men and for many students from non-English speaking backgrounds. Whilst it can be discomfoting to speak up about unfair practices, it benefits other students who are also subjected to these unfair practices. Pretending that they do not happen simply contributes to the maintenance of the status quo. Drawing attention to inequitable aspects of engineering faculty culture is not about being a victim, its actually about being strong and powerful. I believe there is an argument for the need for female engineering students to have the opportunity to get to-

gether across years and across departments to network and talk about their experiences in engineering. This can be very empowering for some students who are isolated from other women in engineering and who may not be aware that other female students have had similar experiences. Recently, such a forum was held and was attended by approximately 40 female engineering students. Evaluation forms indicated that most of these students would attend another function for female engineering students. I also believe that there is a need for both male and female engineering students to get together to discuss issues of equity and diversity in engineering.

Providing a space for female engineering students to meet has got nothing to do with constituting women as victims. It is about valuing and nurturing a group of female students who study in a faculty which in its history, its traditions, its philosophy and its practices is heavily male dominated. If any engineering student wishes to contact me to discuss these or related issues, they are welcome to come and see me or to email me at jane.copeland@adelaide.edu.au

Jane Copeland
Student Equity Officer
Equal Opportunity Office
Ground floor, Horace Lamb Building.

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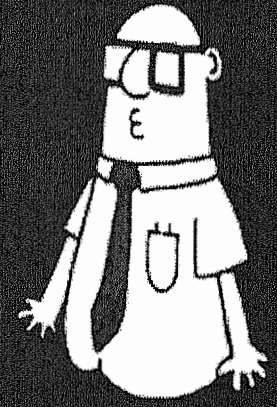
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Chicks that Rock

One of the things that I am extremely proud of is the amount of women that have been involved in the Students' Association at Adelaide University. In fact over the years we have seen women taking a majority of the office bearer positions. Since the first woman president in 1981, out of a possible 18 presidents 12 of them have been women and in the last 7 years 30 of the 40 office bearers have been women. However, how many came from rural/country universities?

I can not claim to be from a rural/country high school, however I was from a school which required a great deal of travelling, and a school where only 5 people attended Adelaide University. In fact a school from a great distance or not from city suburbs can sometimes feel like it's

rural in comparison to other schools. Feeling isolated and withdrawn from the whole process are common feelings. University is a big and daunting place for anyone, however when one does not come from renown schools it is even worse. Familiarity is something that lacks when someone is from a 'rural' area. Everyone else seems to know each other, the camaraderie or the friendly school rivalry does not end when high school ends. It is very difficult to enter into the social circles that has been developed over the many years through high school. Participating in the social activities

helps one overcome the feeling of being left out. Getting involved can be one of the hardest things, yet one of the most rewarding. Everyone involved may seem like best friends and a little clique may have been established it's taking this first step that the hardest. Do I have the time to get involved? Do I really want to get



involved? How do I get involved? Taking this first step will be the best thing anyone can do. Social activities make the transition to university easier. Activities give students the opportunity to interact with others from similar circumstances and the chance to make new friends for life. No one can put a price on the friendships that can develop through social activities. Social events are a great way for students to be exposed to university culture. Becoming involved in the social traditions of your university can be fulfilling and enjoyable in terms of the knowledge you gain.

Activities may seem male dominated. Getting involved can allow for you to organise women friendly events, events that women want to come to and that breakdown the gender stereotypes. Things like organising an all-girl band to play a gig, ensuring that there is an adequate number of female security guards at events,

free childcare and creating women chillout rooms at gigs.

The skills that one can learn from being involved in the organisational side of activities can be extremely beneficial for women. They teach the ability to organise events, the ability to budget, time manage and general marketing and promotional experience, which can lead to further and greater things and can improve job prospects

As the 1998 Activities/Campaigns Vice

President and 1999 Acting SAUA President I gained all of the above mentioned skills, but my involvement in the Students' Association also enabled me to learn about a whole variety of issues ranging from VSU to Up Front Fees. After all, the best way to learn is through having fun. Participating in your Students' Association will help improve your capacity to involve and represent the full range of interests within the student community.

Alida Parente
President
Adelaide University Students' Association (SAUA)

The History Mystery



Kids born today find it difficult to imagine a world without electricity, cars and computers. Likewise, girls who have grown up during the last thirty-or-so years often have no idea how privileged they are. While most of our grandmothers hail from the skirt-wearing, house-cleaning, baby-making era, and our great-grandmothers from a time when women were only just being acknowledged the right to vote, girls today powerstride through the university system and corporate world, their salaries frequently surpassing those of their brothers, husbands, and male peers. Tell a girl today that she can't be an astronaut, a lawyer, a mechanic or an athlete and she'll tell you to come out of the Dark Ages and get a life. Modern girls take for granted their right to contraception, their freedom to wear short skirts in public, and the equal attention they (should) receive in the workplace, at home and in academic environments. Unfortunately, old prejudices from previous generations still linger in today's society. The most obvious place to go looking for sexism (apart from Jeff Kennett) is - alas - in some of the more distinguished volumes to

be found in the Barr Smith Library. Yes: I'm referring to history books. It's a funny thing about history books. According to most of them, women don't actually exist. We know this can't be true, because women exist in today's society, and they must have come from somewhere. But while kings, knights, bishops, wars, socio-economics and politics run all over the pages of history books, women are apparently not considered to be an aspect of our past. Occasionally a queen pops up for a couple of sentences, but the other millions of women who were running all over the Old World having babies, meeting secret lovers, waging wars, managing properties, establishing nunneries and doing all kinds of interesting things don't even score a mention. Everyone knows about great men' (morons) like Henry VIII and Napoleon, but I bet you never heard in school about Queen Matilda who gathered together an army and invaded England in 1138. Or a dashing lass by the name of Emma who led attacks (and won) all over 10th Century France. Or Trotula of Salerno, an 11th Century doctor who wrote medical journals about her innovations in obstetrics and gynaecology (which were plagiarised for centuries afterwards). I am thoroughly sick of picking books off the shelves with names like *Europe: A History of its Peoples* only to find that women are mentioned a sum total of three times or else are completely absent altogether in the contents page and the index. And these writers call themselves historians! I hate to jump on a soap-box and

start preaching, but how would men feel if they opened up a book entitled *The History of the World* and couldn't find any references to the male gender in the entire volume? Sounds ridiculous, doesn't it? Well, this is how I feel every time I attempt to research women in a particular period of history. So I know what you're thinking: we don't have much information about women during history because everyone was really chauvinist back then and nobody thought women were interesting enough to keep records on." WRONG! Anyone who's ever read a history book knows that historians are suckers for detail. If historians want information on some esoteric historical nuance badly enough (like what King Andrew II of Hungary ate for breakfast), they will find it! Basically, what interests an historian is what they will write about. A quick scan of the Barr Smith would show you that an alarming number of historians were/are male. Therefore an alarming amount of research, such as 'gee I wonder what sorts of lives women were leading during history?', never gets conducted. This is such a simple question which *still* has an alarmingly vague wishy-washy kind of answer. I think it's about time our modern girls understood the situation of their sisters in the past - and that those long-dead heroines were given a (louder) voice.

Rebecca Dettman

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Women and the Republic

This is the last edition of *Elle Dit* this century.

We are on the eve of a new century. Such milestones have been, throughout history, times of change. It was at such a time that our nation was born.

As a nation, Australia is presented with an opportunity to embrace a change which could be the hallmark of our nation in the 21st century.

Elle Dit is a women's newspaper.

Women have been at the forefront of change in our nation over the past century, politically, socially and professionally.

Women were the backbone of the pioneering spirit for the first settlers to this country. Australian women have demonstrated immense courage in embracing the challenges of a harsh new land, to demanding and winning equal rights, the vote and representation in Parliaments and the corporate board-rooms of the 1990s.

Women will, I believe, play a critical role in determining the shape of our nation in the years ahead.

Australian women have demonstrated a fierce independence, reflecting our independence as a nation. It is time that independent spirit was reflected in our Constitution.

In November this year, Australians will be asked what is, at the end of the day, a very simple question. Should Australia have an Australian as its Head of State. I am firmly of the view that the answer is YES.

Every Australian citizen should have the right to aspire to be our Head of State. At present, that is an aspiration denied to every Australian citizen regardless of race, religion, sex or profession.

The only way you can become Australia's Head of State is by being born into a family which resides in another country. It also helps if you are the first born male. It seems totally incongruous to me that

our Head of State should be determined by Acts of a foreign Parliament over which we, as Australian citizens, have absolutely no say whatsoever.

There is no doubt that the Constitution has served Australia well. But that is not reason enough to refuse to consider change.



The model to be put to the people in November has three great advantages. It was endorsed by the Constitutional Convention, thereby passing an early and tough test.

It provides incremental change. While some may prefer more radical change, I am convinced that small, incremental change is the safe, sure pathway for our Constitution to advance.

Finally, the model gives every Australian the opportunity for some say in who should be their Head of State.

Those who advocate a 'NO' vote on November 6 are in fact saying to you that, as Australians, you should vote to have no say in determining your Head of State. They prefer our Head of State to be an English person chosen according to a British Act of Parliament. They prefer the monarch's Australian representative to be chosen solely by the Prime Minister of the day.

By formally making a place for the people to nominate fellow Australians and by giving a much greater role to the Parliament made up of the people's representatives in the selection of the

Head of State, Australians will, for the first time, have a say.

Some people urge us to reject the current republican model in favour of more radical change, namely a directly elected president.

There are two reasons why I do not support a directly elected president. First, a direct election will ensure that a very politically motivated person wins the position; and second, a directly elected president would hold substantial political power and thus be a rival for the Prime Minister. We would be building instability into our system.

We've enjoyed peace, order and good government for many years. If we want to continue to enjoy that we should avoid building an obvious instability into our Constitution.

If we give a president the same powers the Governor-General has now and the added political power of being the only person directly elected by all Australians, we set him or her up as political competition for the prime minister.

We would be in effect having two political leaders. That's a recipe for instability.

If we give the president the power of being the only person directly elected by all Australians and reduce his/her powers, we in effect make the prime minister's position much stronger. Clearly, if we reduce the powers of the governor-general/president, we remove one check from the checks and balances that provide stability in our system.

I look forward to having the opportunity again next year to talk to you through the pages of *Elle Dit*.

I hope that at that time, Australia will be well down a path of change that reflects our maturity, independence and multiculturalism.

**Minister for Justice and Customs
Senator the Hon Amanda Vanstone**

The Pregnancy Advisory Centre

21 Belmore Terrace
WOODVILLE PARK SA 5011

Hours: Monday - Friday
8:45am - 4:45pm
Tel: 08 8347 4955
Freecall: 1800 672 966
Fax: 08 834 74994
email: pac@tqeh.nwah.sa.gov.au

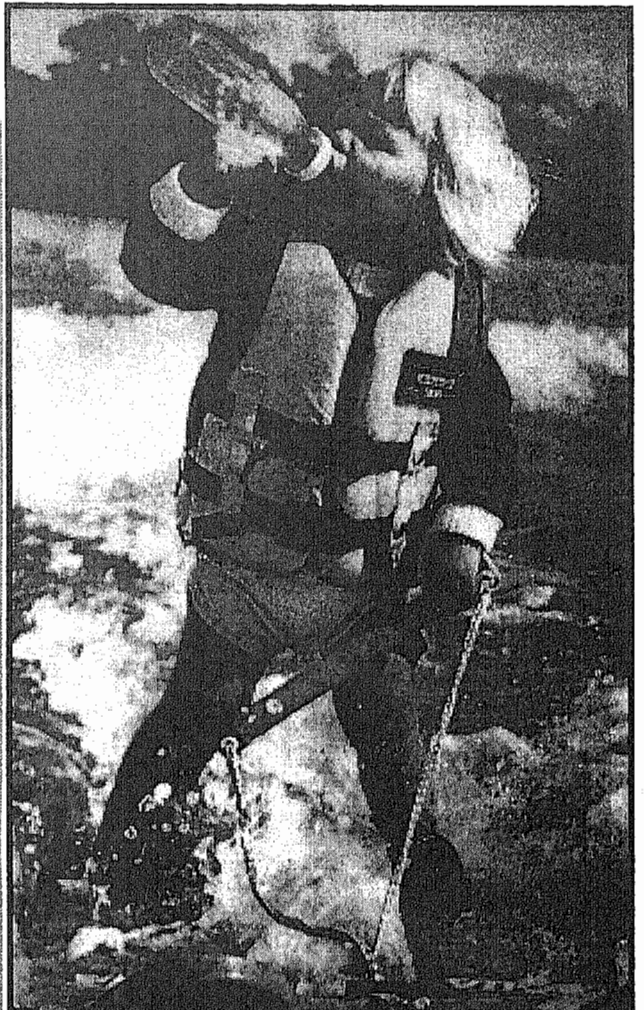
The Centre

The Pregnancy Advisory Centre provides free and confidential services to women facing unplanned pregnancy. These include:

- Counselling
- Pregnancy testing
- Abortion services to 20 weeks gestation with anaesthetic choices
- Contraceptive information and provision
- Sexual health care and information
- Community education

Access

Women are able to self refer to the Pregnancy Advisory Centre. That is, women do not need a doctor's referral. Women with special needs can be catered for. This includes women whose first language is other than English (translators are available), women who live in rural areas of South Australia and women who require child care.



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- O'Week Directors - Up to 3
- O'Camp Directors - Up to 3
- O'Tours Directors - Up to 2
- O'Guide Editors - Up to 3

Applications will be available at the SAUA next term. For any info. about positions please call Tammy at the SAUA on 8303 5406



QUESTIONS:

- 1) What do you like most about being a woman?
- 2) If you were a man for a day, what would you do?
- 3) What is your favourite part of a woman's body, and why?



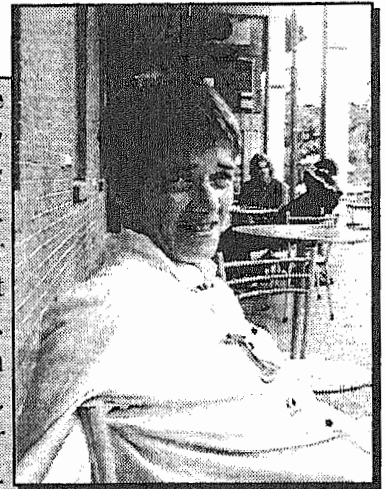
Lynn
Fielding small-fry by the Lawns

- 1) Being smarter than men.
- 2) What *wouldn't* I do?
- 3) I like a muscular body.

Kaye

Smoking and joking outside the Wills

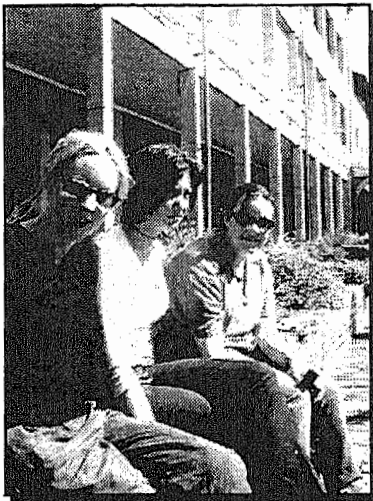
- 1) Other women.
- 2) I'd go to a sauna and hear what men *really* say about women.
- 3) Voice. I just think women have really attractive voices. What can I say? I'm a sucker for a beautiful voice.



Kui

Taking a break outside Napier

- 1) Coming from a different culture, I get stared at a lot and I think it's my femininity that brings people to look at me ... and my plaits.
- 2) I don't know ... what do men usually do?
- 3) The neck and waist. A little tiny waist and a small neck are very feminine, I think.



Sarah, Emily and Amanda
Raunchy talk in the Cloisters

- 1) **Sarah:** Not having to always hide what you're feeling.
- Emily:** The fact that I get to have my period every month.
- Amanda:** Blaming everything on mood swings.
- 2) **Sarah:** I'll have a think about that ... Fuck as many women as possible.
- Emily:** I have no idea. I've never been a man.
- Amanda:** I'd go to the beach and walk around wearing only board shorts.
- 3) **Amanda:** Eyes, because you can tell so much from them.
- Sarah:** I like girl's hands, because guys' are disgusting.
- Emily:** I like women's boobs. I can't help it, I'm obsessed by them.

Pop



Leah

Reclining in the Wills Refectory

- 1) The ability to have mood swings without repercussions.
- 2) Learn to pee standing up. And write my name in the snow.
- 3) Toenails, because you can paint them. According to your mood swings.



Dagmara and Nicole

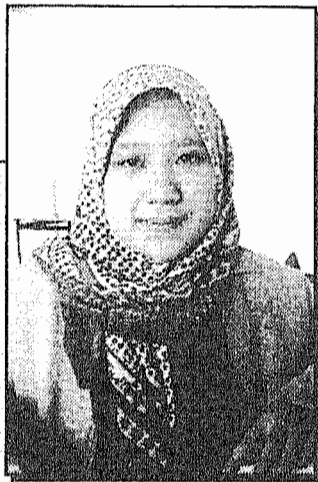
Just meeting outside Napier

- 1) **Dagmara:** Being able to smile sweetly and get lots of drinks bought for you.
Nicole: I don't think it's anything special. It's just that we're not a man. I wouldn't want to be a man for anything in the world.
- 2) **Nicole:** Have sex with a woman. Just to know what its like on the other side.
Dagmara: Ditto.
Nicole: Or take a piss in a urinal standing up.
- 3) **Nicole:** The entire form.
Dagmara: The stomach. The outline of the stomach and hips - the way they're shaped, curved ...

Nawal

Getting some study done in the Napier Building

- 1) The freedom to do what you want, when you want - that's what I like about being a woman today: not being restricted.
- 2) Go surfing. And not wear my headgear.
- 3) Face: it conveys everything.

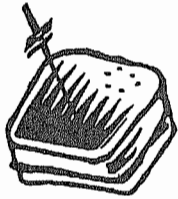


Gene and Kuan

Going wedge crazy in the Cloisters

- 1) **Gene:** It's better than being a man.
Kuan: I like the privileges you get as a woman.
Gene: Boys get blamed more if they do something wrong.
- 2) **Gene:** Tease the girls. Look for a girlfriend. Take off my clothes.
Kuan: I'd go after a man and see what his reaction was.
- 3) **Gene:** Breasts, but not my breasts. Other women's breasts.
Kuan: Breasts: they're the special part of a woman's body. Eyes and stuff, men have them.





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Thursday and noon 'til late Fridays. Also
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light meal, make your own rolls and sandwiches. Scrumptious focaccias and
croissants, great cappuccinos, cold drinks and giant milkshakes, as well as
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5.00pm Friday (term time).



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cakes, coffees, eat in or take away, indoors or
alfresco. Friday Happy Hour. Open 10.00am -
10.00pm, Monday - Friday. Fully licensed
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Monday - Friday. Vegetarians catered for. Check out our homemade
soup in winter.



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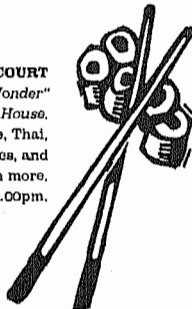
INTERNATIONAL FOOD COURT

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3.00pm - 5.00pm (holiday times).



For daily specials and updates, check out the union website:
www.adelaide.edu.au/AUU/

Note: opening times can vary during vacations

totally wimmin powered radio

Totally Wimmin Powered Radio. what more is there to say? radio powered completely by wimmin, about women and for womyn. intense yet accomodating training sessions over the past few weeks have bred a new crop of radio stars - women ready to hit the airwaves this week. radio, like most other media outlets, is traditionally male dominated, especially in the more 'techie' stuff; controlling the instruments, pre-recording soundbites, doing interviews and using the computers. as well as taking over the technology in the radio station, twp is about getting feminist issues onto the airwaves and into the people's minds.

an important aspect of twp is that it functions in a women-only learning environment; with varying ways of teaching, from others, whatever suits each women as an individual. this year has produced an impressive bunch of chicks who've all learnt skills to broadcast 12 hours of radio. tune into student radio 531am as women live out everyone of their feminist dreams. the next three pages and this one include a program guide for twp... rip it out and stick it on the fridge!

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 13TH
9PM TO 11PM OPEN MIC

A two hour session where we open the mic up to local women performers. expect to hear a bit of everything: spoken word, vocals, music. Any interested women are welcome to come along and join in (be at the station by 8.30pm)

11 TO 11.30 SUSIES SNIPPETS

What is the future of feminism? *Susie's Snippets* features a vox populi journey about this very question...

11.30 TO 12 WOMEN IN AUSTRALIAN MUSIC

Join Anne as she delves into Australian music and how girls and women fit in to it.

12 TO 1AM DONT CRY, SCREAM

If you think that feminism has not gone far enough, tune in to 'don't cry, scream' for feminist revolutionary polictics, poetics, music and chit-chat. brought to you by resistance <socialist youth organisation>



MONDAY Sept. 13th
TUESDAY Sept. 14th
SATURDAY Sept. 18th

Totally Wimmin Radio Powered



MON.

9 pm

10 pm

11 pm

12 am

1 am

← Open Mike

SUZIE'S SNIPPETS
Aussie
♀ in ROCK!

don't cry,
♀ SCREAM!

TUES

LOCAL NOISE

SKATIN' UP
A FRENZY



12:15 am

♀ in SPORTS

SAT.

the F SPOT
celebrates
in Film



11-11:30
Hum
in C

till 12 am
How do
we
COUPLE?

Collective
SHOW

elle dit

totally wimmin powered radio

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 14TH

9PM TO 10PM LOCAL NOISE

Featuring local girl band **TOXIC SHOCK**. Listen in as they grind out some punk influenced tunes.

10 TO 11 SKATIN UP A FRENZY

marian, elise & kiron skate the airwaves. tune in as they balance the unbalanced, talk about grrrl skaters, talk to girl skaters, & play some punk, hip hop, & electronica. they've got interviews, vox pops, & enough skate tips for you to grind your way to the top. **remember: girls can do anything!**

11PM TO 12AM TELEJUNKIES

For those of you who watch far too much tv (is there such a thing?), we will have a chat about supremely bad chicks on the box, as well as a few of the good ones. So for a chat about Dawson's, Ally McBeal, Daria, Neighbours and Breakers even, join Alexis, Heather, Jackie et. al. on Tuesday night.

12AM TO 1AM GIRLS IN SPORT

An inquiry into women in sport by Jess. Tune in and see what turns up . . .

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 18TH

9PM TO 10PM THE F-SPOT CELEBRATES WOMEN IN FILM

Heather & Bree look at strong women characters in contemporary films . . . and then some

10 TO 11 INTRODUCTORY SPICE 101

Join Tanisha and Ilze for a post-modern deconstruction of the Spice Girls. **Pre-requisites:** Pass or better seven years of age. Intimate knowledge of lyp synching and dance moves. **Coursework:** We will investigate the impact of Ginger's departure, the true meaning of "wannabe", and the reflexive mix of character stereotype.

11 TO 11.30 HUMIN C

A low-fi journey through the fuzz of a brain as it crunches in, around and out of gender madness.

11.30 TO 12AM HOW DO WE COUPLE?

a discussion about love, lust, marriage, and [sex]uality. presented by jo and kim.

12AM TO 1AM COLLECTIVE SHOW

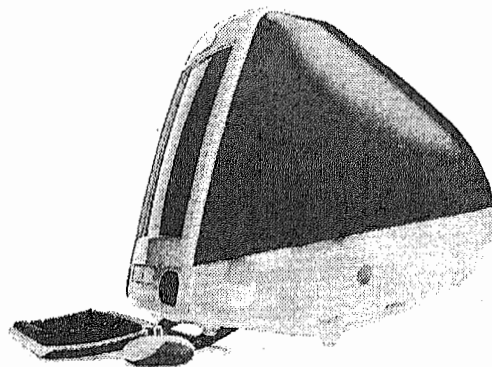
Tune in and find out what this totally wimmin' powered process is all about, what goes on, and be challenged by how many women you can fit into a studio in one go!



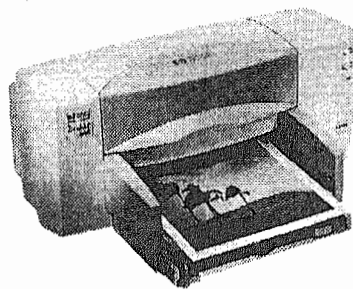
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Now you can save over \$400 when you purchase an iMac with a Hewlett Packard 880c colour inkjet printer from Camtech Campus Computers.

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Priced for students, staff and alumni of the University of Adelaide and Flinders University.



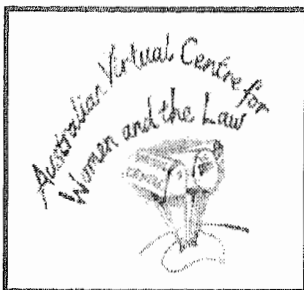
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CAMTECH

National Women's Justice Coalition



The National Women's Justice Coalition (NWJC) is soon to launch the Australian Virtual Centre for Women and the Law (AVCWL). The AVCWL will boost networking on women's justice and related issues and facilitate and promote use of new communication technologies by women, with particular emphasis on women in regional, rural and remote Australia.

E-mail lists allow people subscribed to a particular list to send mail to the list and this is automatically forwarded to all of those who subscribe to that list. This can obviously be an extremely cost effective and convenient way of communicating, including communicating to very large numbers of people.

Evaluations of community based e-mail lists in Australia and overseas, point to the effectiveness of e-mail lists in forming and aiding the work of communities of interest for a range of purposes.

We are working now to establish a range of lists and to build list populations prior to the formal launch of the Centre. These early lists give a good picture of the likely uses of the facility. That is:

Lists for Board communication and/or member networking:- Australian Women Lawyers, NSW Women Lawyers Association, Women's Electoral Lobby, Women with Disabilities Australia, the Older Women's Network

Subject information sharing and working group lists : 'We-the-women' the public list of the Australian Women's Constitutional Network; child support; domestic violence competency standards; criminal injuries compensation; lesbian law reform

Broad based input and awareness raising: 13 email lists launched at the recent Beijing Plus 5 sub-regional conference in Sydney ie. one general list and one for each of the 12 critical areas of concern

Closer cooperation and better coordination: Pamelas-list (the NWJC provided list for representatives of national women's organisations and regional and state women's organisations not represented nationally will shortly be relocated to the Centre); women law students email list which is working on the formation of a National Network of Women Law Students; Working Women's Centres, network and subject lists.

The Centre will provide free e-mail lists to individuals, organisations and networks in all States and Territories and nationally. Lists will have purposes, relevant to promoting women's legal equality, including promoting the capacity of organisations to represent and/or assist women with particular needs.

We expect to have about 150 self administered and self facilitated email lists operating within about 6 months of the launch.

In moving towards the 21st Century it will be imperative for women to familiarise themselves with new technologies in order to continue the move towards justice for women. The AVCWL is a useful tool with which women will be able to familiarise themselves with the capacity of these technologies and do so in a supportive and helpful environment.

The Virtual Centre will be launched nationally in September 1999 with a series of Regional launches in October and November. For further information contact the Australian Virtual Centre for Women and the Law at the National Women's Justice Coalition GPO Box 3184, Canberra ACT 2601, phone 02 6247 2075 fax 02 6257 3070 or email virtualcentre@nwjc.org.au or see our website www.nwjc.org.au



Advice from the Vice

Women have many reasons to feel confident as we look back over this century and ponder the century to come. The women's movement, with its roots in the latter half of last century, has probably been the most successful social movement of the 20th century, achieving spectacular successes in a relatively short period of time. There are many issues yet to be satisfactorily resolved: issues such as violence against women, achieving satisfactory balance in the contribution of men and women to family responsibilities, and removing structural barriers to women's progression through the ranks in business, politics and academia. Women are entering the workforce,

tertiary education and the professions, in particular, at an exponentially increasing rate. Despite this change, women still hold a proportionately small number of senior positions in business and public institutions. On one level, this isn't surprising - given the average age of business and other leaders. Twenty years ago the University of Adelaide enrolled about twice as many men as women. Today, the balance is only slightly in favour of men, with the trends indicating that men will soon be in the minority. These trends indicate that the ascension of larger numbers of women to leadership positions will happen, but this does not mean we

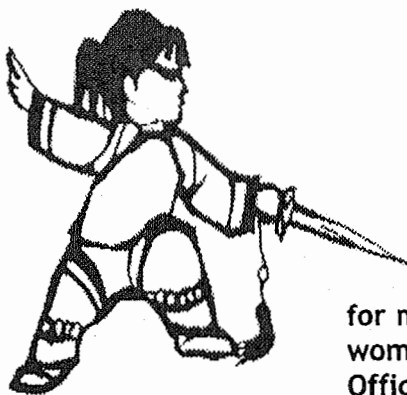
should be complacent. In fact, we need to be vigilant in removing barriers to the advancement of women within organisations and the professions.

The University of Adelaide has a proud history of achievement by its staff, students and graduates. Women have been involved in our endeavours from the very early days, albeit outnumbered by men for the large part of our history.

I'm excited by the prospect of large numbers of talented and highly-motivated women taking positions of leadership in the next century.

Mary O'Kane: Vice-Chancellor

Fem X



women's policy and action conference

25/26 September,
Union House
Melbourne University

for more information, contact your campus
women's officer or the NUS National Women's
Officer, Genevieve on (03) 934 7774

or email:

womens@nus.asn.au



authorised by Genevieve Derwent, National women's Officer

The Road to Equal Opportunity

I would like to share some of the experiences which have led me to become Commissioner for Equal opportunity - as well as some thoughts about how things are at the end of the 1990s.

I was born into a time of post war prosperity, and had a fairly typical upbringing for the era. My father was a tradesman - and mum stayed at home, occupied with child rearing and domestic duties. I was born when mum was 17, the first of five. Money was scarce.

At the end of Year 11, I won a scholarship to teachers' College. But my father thought it wasn't such a good idea. He said that it would be wasted: after all, I would just get married, have children and give up work anyway. It would be better to get a clerical job - enough to tide me over until the day when I would have a husband to take care of me. It would be better to save the money to pay for my two *brothers'* education, as they would be supporting wives and children.

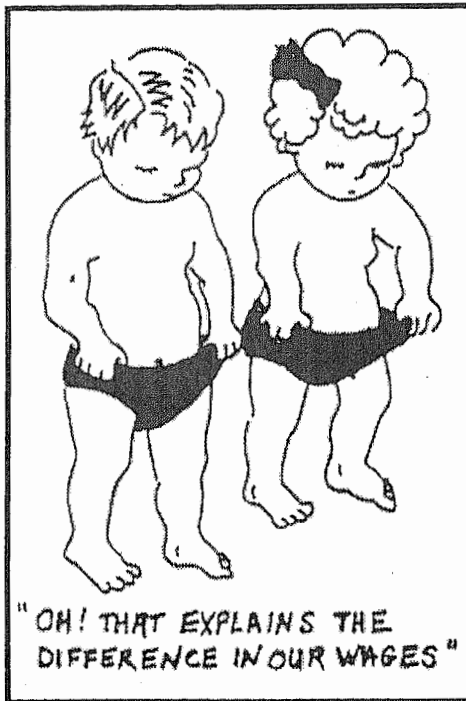
This was the orthodoxy of the time. It was a time when such assumptions were made about women, men and their roles.

I did what was expected. I left school and got a job in a bank. This was 1970. I soon learned that women couldn't be bank tellers - only men could apply. And men, needless to say, got paid more than women doing other clerical and administrative tasks.

This was also the time when women had to leave the permanent teaching force when they married; there was no maternity leave, limited social welfare - and there were numerous other impediments for women wishing to live outside the traditional role of wife and mother.

In my early twenties I applied for mature age entry to university, and this was the beginning of a totally different life for this fifties-born girl.

What a time! I loved it: the opportunity to learn, to not just *dream* but to *participate* in this new, changing world. In retrospect, I have to say that we were a rather self indulgent generation - yet amazingly optimistic.



Feminism also took a serious hold in the 1970s, and I revelled in the possibilities. It held a great relevance to my future choice of jobs. It was also the time of great legislative reform and development, including:

- the Sex Discrimination Act in 1975 (South Australia was the first State to make sex discrimination unlawful).
 - the SA Equal Opportunity Act, in 1984
 - the Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act, 1984
 - the Affirmative Action Act, in 1986
- I became Director of the SA Government's Domestic Violence Prevention Unit in the 1980s - and I got a taste of what it took to influence change. Space

does not permit me to go into detail about the job, but I can say that much work was done to challenge the prevailing myths, the lies, and half truths about what happens in domestic violence situation.

Sometimes you hear negative comments about little has changed for women. We also hear from those who say feminism has gone too far. I have to disagree with both views.

I believe there has been an enormous shift for women. Life in many ways is incomparable to the fifties - and so it is disingenuous to say little has changed since.

However, in some respects there *has* been slow progress. Professor Bob Gregory's research at ANU tells us; "in 1966, 26.9% of women over 15 were full-time workers; in 1998, 27.3% are." In 32 years, that's not much difference. And in 1999, still less than 10% of women are in senior management positions.

What has changed in the nineties is that we cannot give glib or simplistic answers to the real dilemmas facing us. It is a time of great change and complexity. Slogans or rhetoric will no longer suffice.

Now is a time when clarity about what you are doing, rigour and transparency, are critically important. Good intentions - to be caring and passionate about an issue - are not enough. I believe we still need legislative backup for injustices that are regrettably still with us - but care is needed in exercising such powers.

In the area of disability, for example - an area that I know about, as I was Director of the Intellectual disability Services Council - my tasks and priorities regularly revolved around funding. Different people and groups competed for a shrinking pool of funding resources. So I had to be absolutely sure that decisions I made were accountable and rigorous; and the

policies I enacted were utterly coherent and consistent. To me, this is the best way of bringing *fairness* and *credibility* to the choices about *which* rights are most in need of protecting, about who you help and who you don't.

You are always going to hear someone else saying: "They are getting that benefit; why not me?" So you need to be consistent about the decisions you make, and completely transparent about why they are being made.

I have grown up from that family of five in the fifties - and in my student and working life I have lived through a lot of structural changes from the 1960s and 70s to the current times. However, my career and my successes are largely based upon my changing *with* the times, and basing my efforts upon the demands and restrictions of the present day.

The world is a complex place now. To *care* is only a starting point.

Linda Matthews
South Australian Commissioner
for Equal Opportunity



Good girl sweeping away the patriarchy

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Breast Cancer - Be Informed

Breast Cancer is an important health issue for all women. As women we have to be fully informed of the facts relating to this disease. I am concerned that the facts are being hidden from women because we are not being told of the increased risk of Breast Cancer with abortion.

I am not a scientist and could not hope to be an expert on this issue but it goes something like this: The cells in the breast of a woman who has never been pregnant are undifferentiated. These cells are vulnerable to radiation and certain chemicals which can give rise to cancerous tumours later in life. If a woman goes through some weeks of a normal pregnancy and then has an abortion she is left with more of these cancer-vulnerable cells than before she became pregnant. Also, any potentially cancer forming cells already in her breasts have been stimulated to multiply. Because of this there is an increased chance that a cancerous

tumour will develop. On the other hand, the breasts of a woman who has undergone a full term pregnancy contains fully differentiated cells that are resistant to carcinogens. The hormone oestrogen causes the undifferentiated cells in the breast to reproduce and an overexposure of this chemical contributes to the breast cancer risk.

These days we are exposed to higher levels of oestrogen than our grandmothers and great grandmothers were. We face these excess levels through our use of birth control pills, later or lack of pregnancies and breast feeding, abortion, an elicit high in fat, meat and dairy products and hormone replacement therapy following menopause. What makes me bloody well sick is that this information, which is the result of many studies including that of 1970s World Health Organisations is still being kept from the public. In this years

coverage of Breast Cancer Awareness Week in the Advertiser there was no mention of the increased Oestrogen/Breast Cancer risk. Women are told to protect themselves by having regular mammograms - the rest is a big secret reserved for a special few.

The big question is: why are women not being told of the risks associated with abortion? Are the medical profession, counsellors and the media controlling the output of information?

The fact is that a choice can only be liberating if the outcome is desired. If a women makes a choice without knowing the consequences of her decision she is not being liberated but enslaved. The world has too many enslaved women. We must be free.

Sincerely,
with love,
Veronica

Thank You, Dr Pap

I think it is about time that we contemporary females got over the thought of having a Pap Smear as being completely horrifying. The current fear induced mind-set requires envisaging a geriatric GP "down there" prodding away with some excruciatingly cold implement, scrutinizing the last remaining thread of your dignity. The truth is that Pap Smears are a necessary evil - or should I say, embarrassment. Nobody is immune to cervical cancer, and every educated woman owes it to herself to reduce the risk.

The Pap Smear is essentially a test to identify changes in cells around the cervix. It alone cannot be used to diagnose cancer of the cervix, but what it does do is identify cancerous and pre-cancerous changes and abnormalities to cervical cells. All women over the age of 18 (including sexually active teenagers) are advised to ensure that they have an

annual Pap smear, which is usually performed in conjunction with pelvic and breast examinations.

An American GP named George Papanicolaou pioneered the Pap Smear method of cancer detection in the 1930's. The Pap Smear examination was introduced after World War 2, and according to American statistics, the deaths caused by uterine cervical cancer have decreased by as much as 70% due to this method of screening. However, these statistics also indicate that out of every five women who die as a result of cervical cancer, four have not had an annual Pap Smear test as recommended. The procedure is painless and only takes a few minutes, all that is required is for your GP to take a gentle scraping of cells from your cervix which are then smeared onto a glass microscope slide to be analyzed by a pathology lab. Once at the lab, the cells are stained and then

microscopically examined by pathologists. The results of your Pap Smear are reported to your doctor who will then notify you. Pap Smear tests are commonplace medical procedure nowadays. The test can be performed by your GP or sexual health specialists at sexual health clinics such as Clinic 275 here in Adelaide. The SAUA also provides women's health advice through the appointment of a Women's and Female Sexuality Officer. These people along with the student Warringa health service enable comprehensive and confidential advice, treatment and referrals for all students.

Simple. So get over yourself, stop wondering what all the fuss is about and guarantee your reproductive health - just because you can.

Marissa Meller-Harris

Cervix cancer at the end of the millennium

In some ways it might seem that not much has changed in the area of cervix cancer as we move towards the end of the 20th century.

In the third world where there are no organised screening programs, cervix cancer is still a leading cause of death in women.

Cervix cancer still kills disproportionate numbers of indigenous women, women from non-English speaking backgrounds and poor women.

And the Pap smear still remains the best test to help prevent cancer of the cervix. Yes, I'm afraid it still is and is likely to be for quite some time.

I'm sure that most women prefer almost anything to having their regular Pap smear and think that if that is the best we can do then medicine hasn't advanced very far at the end of the second millennium!


After all who would actually want to have a Pap smear? Well most women should. The facts bear this out.

At the end of the 20th century, after having Pap smears available for 40 or 50 years and an organised screening program in place throughout the nineties, Australia is among countries with the lowest rates of cervix cancer. And in South Australia we have the lowest rates of morbidity and mortality from cancer of the cervix of all the states in Australia.

And most of this can be attributed to women having regular Pap smears.

So put up with a little cold discomfort and once you start having sex you need to start thinking about having Pap smears. Women should start having Pap smears within one to two years of first having sex and then every two years. Paps you should. It could save your life.

SA Cervix Screening Program



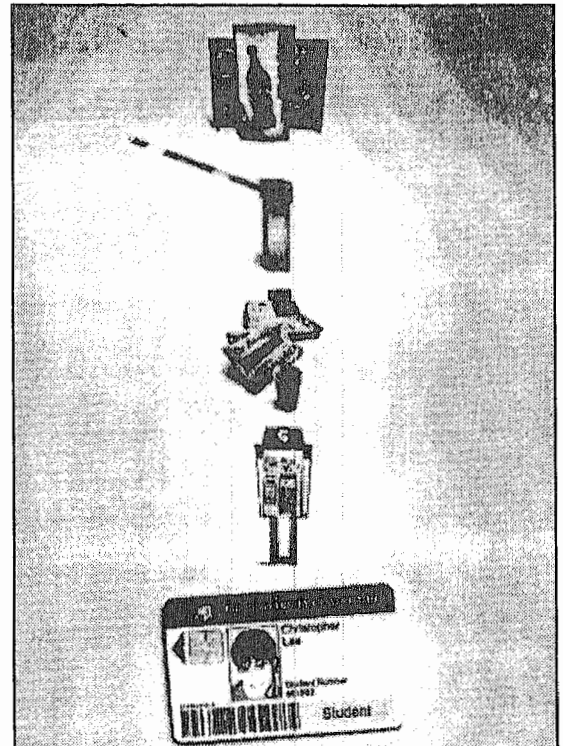
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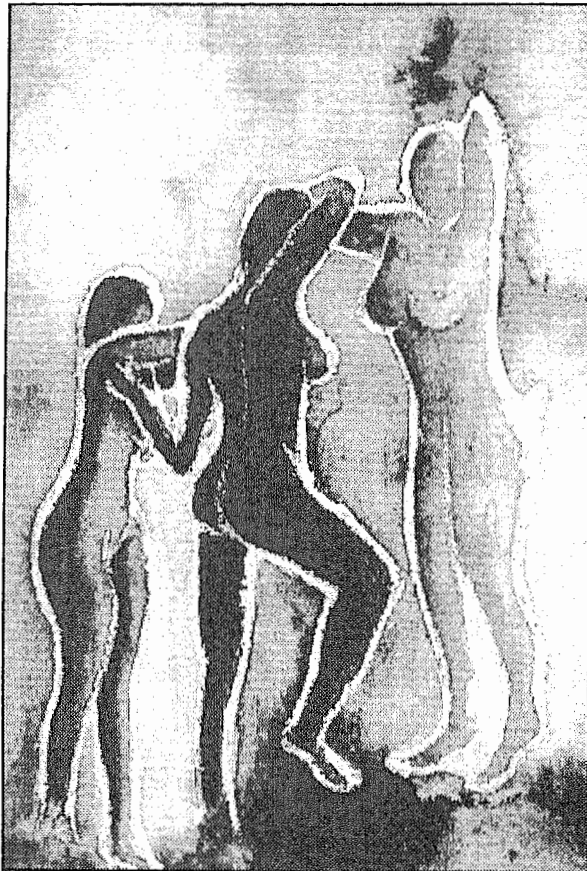


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Making sense of the

For some time I have been attempting to decide just how to write about abortion. That is, I have been vacillating between a largely academic piece that explores conceptualisations of the female body and body ownership or, a first hand account that captures the experiential elements that pertain to these concepts. I have decided instead to just talk about my experience of abortion. Hopefully some of the abstract concepts and analyses might be extrapolated upon by the discerning reader. If that's not your thing, then I would invite women to explore their own values around abortion. See what you think.

Firstly, just to contextualise: I am a final year student doing a post-graduate degree in Social Work. Part of the requirements for this degree include having to go on field placements which are essentially like those fond memories you have of high school work experience (although you get to do more than just the crap jobs). This year I completed an 80 day placement (over a 6 month period) at an abortion clinic. It's interesting whenever I tell people where my placement was. I have been ignored, stared at, and congratulated: such is the intensity of feeling around abortion. During my placement I counselled women (as well as couples) who were in the process of making a decision about whether to continue with, or discontinue the pregnancy. I also worked in a 'health worker' role which involves sharing information



with the woman about the medical procedures related to abortion. Some of the things that I have noticed as recurring themes highlight the way in which our society discourages dialogue that explores women's exercise of control over their bodies. For example, many women that I saw were surprised by the number of women frequenting the centre. Because we aren't free to openly discuss abortion, it follows that women feel extremely isolated when they are in the position where they need to decide if it is an option for them. Many women say that they have been 'against' abortion, until they themselves fell pregnant, which

suggests there is a bit of 'othering' going on. So... I guess the point to be made here is that women have abortions - in fact I think the latest stats suggest that one in every three to four women in Australia will have an abortion at some stage during their lives. Women also have abortions regardless of culture, age, sexuality, lifestyle, material well-being, etc...

HIERARCHICAL REASONING

Something I find incredibly interesting is the way in which women are expected to live within clearly oppressive defined parameters that fabricate the reality of women's experience. For example, have you ever heard (yourself or someone else) say "Oh, it's OK for a woman to have an abortion if she's been raped/ if she's too young/ only if it's her first/ second/ blah abortion/

insert arbitrary rule here..." Unfortunately, I would argue that we are so used to denying women the right to make decisions about their own body that this bizarre rationale has been fashioned. Such hierarchical ordering (which is meant to accommodate for every women's story experience) is utterly stifling to women because it says that women cannot be trusted. It also assumes that women's experiences may fit easily into generic categories. Consider instead that whatever a woman's reasons are, they are hers and must be trusted: she is the expert about her own life, and, contrary to many men's fears,

abortion experience

women do not make such decisions with flippancy.

THE CONTRACEPTION MYTH

Successful marketing around contraception has encouraged a belief in and reliance upon the wonders of the modern day contraceptive. Unfortunately this is often used as an argument against unplanned pregnancy: that is the argument goes that there could be no reason for someone to get pregnant with all the contraceptive choice available. However, this does not provide scope for the many facets of women lives that may interfere with this 'choice'. Access to contraceptives relies on a physical closeness to doctors (who will prescribe contraception) as well as relying on the resources to gain contraception (like money). Consideration must be given to the fact that women could have allergies to some forms of contraception; they may have illnesses or circumstances that make contraception difficult or impossible to obtain to maintain. It also must not be forgotten that there is not one contraceptive that is 100% effective. And, while we're considering these things, why is it that women have to take take responsibility for contraception anyway? Along with the failure of contraception comes, often, a sense of blame. Women may feel as if they have failed because of an unplanned pregnancy, or they may feel others blame towards them. The thing to realise here is that, to borrow the eloquent and oft used bumper-sticker type

phrase: 'shit happens'. Yes, whatever the context, the reality is that women do get pregnant without planning to be.

SPIRITUALITY AND ABORTION

Making sense of the abortion experience is one that differs with each woman. Because we all have differing religious or spiritual beliefs, the way each of us see the world differs. It should also be noted that women who identify as Christian or 'religious' do also have abortions. This may be counter-intuitive for those who might conceptualise 'morality' within dicholomous categories. A classic example is the old argument about 'killing', which is applied to abortion in order to argue about the 'moral bankruptcy' inherent in the process. Without launching into the killing/not killing argument, the point that I'd like to make here relates to my experience in working with women who are having abortions. Many have shared their spiritual beliefs with me and I particularly like the concept that the pregnancy has a potential for 'power' or to become a soul. Instead of the abortion being something that 'kills' this, it is, rather, the means by which this potential is moved on to another (temporal or spatial) place.

FERTILITY

Something that I have given a lot of thought to is the concept of fertility. Some women report that they feel guilty about women who cannot conceive, and that in choosing not to continue with a pregnancy for themselves is somehow unfair to those who cannot get pregnant or who may lose the pregnancy by

miscarriage. Another way of looking at this is to see both scenarios as being about the same thing: fertility. Tied up in this is the concept of fertility control as well as the reality that our bodies are not always going to do the things we want them to. It is in this way that it can be understood that a pregnant woman could work in an abortion clinic, or that a woman who cannot conceive or chooses not to have children could work in places around childbirth. This is sometimes difficult for people to understand, such is the level of controversy around women's right to choose when the right time (if ever) comes to continue with a pregnancy.

AND FINALLY

At the beginning of this piece I mentioned the mixed reactions I receive from people about my choice of placement. One thing I would like to say is that, contrary to many people's expectations, working in a woman centred environment has been a thoroughly rewarding and wonderful experience. My placement was a fantastic and positive experience that embraced the wonders of women, feminism, empowerment, choice and self-determination. I learned so much, not only about abortion, but I had the opportunity to look within explore my own values and those of our society, and to do so in an environment that was safe and inspiring. Hopefully this article raises some issues that relate to abortion that may facilitate similar exploration.

Priscilla

Perfect Body



than 5 times) are 75% more likely to experience depression (Kenardy J, The Australian Longitudinal Study of Women's Health: Weight, Shape and Dieting, cited in Challenge the Body Culture Conference Proceedings, 1997). Your body image is the mental picture that you have of your body, it also incorporates how you feel in your body physically and emotionally. Many people, and especially women often don't see themselves as they actually are. Naomi Wolf, in her book *The Beauty Myth*, comments "If anorexia is defined as a

show pieces and objects. Women in our society today are encouraged to become smaller with the obsession that health = slimness = happiness. Success, beauty, love, sexuality and happiness are promoted as attached to and depending on being thin. An ideal weight is presented as a requirement for being sexually attractive. Unfortunately limits have not been set. The popular notion seems to be that as long as a woman isn't 'badly' anorexic, being thin is not hazardous. Our standard of normal body size has become so thin that 'average' weight people are considered abnormal. It is in the interest of an industry such as the diet industry to make consumers feel insecure about their bodies and eating habits. They rely on you to buy their products, so they stylise an image, a lifestyle, skin products, a hairstyle and unsound diets for 'you' (ie. for their sales).

Many women have life experiences, which lead them to use food as a way of coping with uncomfortable feelings and painful issues, contributing to the development of eating disorders. The term 'Eating Disorders' covers a wide range of problems associated with food, eating and weight control. The main eating disorders are anorexia nervosa (a self-imposed and severe condition of attempts at emancipation through starvation), bulimia (binges of food and then purging with vomiting and/or laxatives) and compulsive eating (preoccupation with food and constantly overeating, self-loathing). The pressures for women to be a certain weight and size means that many women are continually on and off weight reducing diets. Since most women eventually put weight back on after a diet, the sense of failure and obsession is often intensified. Women who diet frequently (more

compulsive fear of and fixation upon food, perhaps most western women can be called ... mental anorexics." Approximately 45% of medically underweight women think they are too fat. These facts and figures are scary when you consider that approximately 20% of anorexics will die as a result of their disorder, and, when what is held up as 'perfect' or 'ideal' is actually a disorder. A generation ago, models weighed 8% less than the average woman, today they weigh 23% less, this is because the ideal that is presented to us through the modelling industry has been getting much thinner. The correlations between eating disorders and demeaning images of women are substantial. Both are about women's bodies and culturally imposed definitions of beauty. Both take control of women's bodies away from women and replace it with the notion that women are commodities,

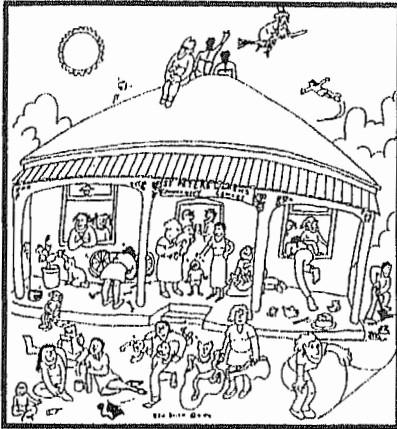
TEN REASONS NOT TO DIET

1. **Your weight was genetically programmed**
2. **Dieting slows your metabolism**
3. **It leads to eating disorders**
4. **You're always hungry**
5. **And what is the point?**
6. **You're depriving yourself of essential nutrition**
7. **You put off living**
8. **You'll gain it back**
9. **You feed the diet industry**
10. **It makes you feel bad**

derived from Sassy magazine



The Women's Community Centre



An institution in the community for over twenty years, the Women's Community Centre is one of very few places still focussed on forwarding the feminist agenda through the community. Begun as part of a seventies women's lib action, the Centre is still flourishing, though in need of funding in 1999.

The WCC opened its doors for the first time in 1977, after ideas originating in 1975, international Women's Year. The St Peter's women's group was formed in early 1975 to take advantage of a declaration of support from St Peter's council for initiatives by and for women. The group, largely from the North East group of WEL, came together to consider the needs of women in the St Peter's area.

The Centre was initially funded by the then Department of Community Welfare, providing two paid, part-time coordinators for the Centre. The Arts Grant Advisory Council awarded an equipment grant for the setting up of craft rooms, and a child care coordinator was also funded. The Centre has evolved into the 1999 Centre, with many changes taking place along the way, but still with the same ideal of providing a space for women to meet and share time and ideas together in a women friendly space.

In the past few years the Centre has been continually struggling for funding,

securing small grants where possible to ensure the Centre's success is continued. Currently the Coordinator is paid on an irregular basis, and there is a part time child care coordinator. All other women who work in the Centre (this includes Managers, Office Workers, Child Carers, Maintenance staff, and more) contribute their own time and effort on a wholly voluntary basis.

The Centre offers a number of services to women in the wider Adelaide community. Each term the Centre offers a variety of courses for women to participate in, at low cost and most times with free or low-cost childcare available. This is an essential part of the Centre's program, and hundreds of women from the community join classes and take part in Centre activities.

The Centre also acts as an information and referral service for women, ensuring that women have access to any available information and support at all times. Women call the Centre and drop in for information about women's services, and referrals to different agencies. It is important that women in the community are aware of this service, and that there are approachable women on the other end of the telephone line willing to offer them support, if necessary, and information and referrals.

The Centre offers a number of free support services for women as well, including occasional childcare, a qualified counsellor, and a free legal advice service. The legal service involves local women lawyers volunteering their time to give women free, confidential advice regarding legal issues. The Centre's volunteer program provides an outlet for many women to work in situations where they may not have had opportunities, furthering both their own skills and the Centre's.

The next term program for the Centre is

coming out in the next week; it is offering courses including English Speaking Practice, Internet Training, Women without Children, Walking, Yoga, Oil Painting, Craft, Relaxation/ Dance, Theatre skills for women, Introduction to Auslan, Home Maintenance, Anger, aggression and intimacy, and Gardening skills.

There are lots of ways to get in touch with the Centre:

Drop in: 64 Nelson St, Stepney

Call: 83626571

Email: wccsa@wccsa.asn.au

Or checkout the website:
www.wccsa.asn.au

Women's Community Centre Upcoming Fundraising events:

DINNER WITH ROBYN ARCHER

'Telling It How It Is -- Things You Wouldn't Tell Your Mum'

Enjoy pre dinner drinks to the sound of a women's traditional and contemporary Papua New Guinean performance by 'Sunam'

A two-course meal at the Festival Centre Banquet Room, 7pm, Tuesday 23 November for \$50

Bookings Essential, Call the Centre for more information 83626571

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When Night is Falling Friday 15
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The Company of Strangers Friday
December 3 \$10

Call the Centre (83626571) to reserve your ticket and pay at the door. Hurry! Limited tickets!

Women and

Many people are still unclear about what eating disorder really are, how do you know if you or a friend have an eating disorder, how many women suffer with eating disorders, are they a mental disorder, what causes them, and how do people recover from them?

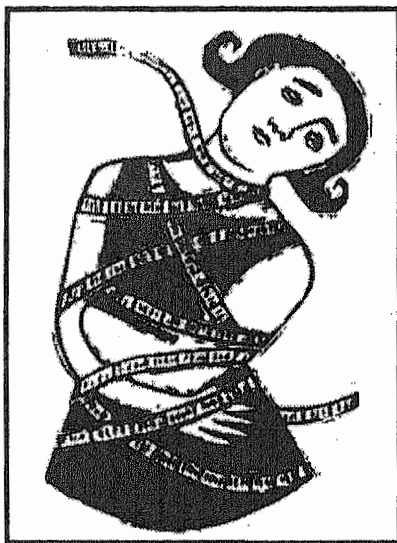
At the Anorexia Bulimia Nervosa Association (ABNA) we consider eating disorders to be a 'spectrum', i.e. there are the so called clinical eating disorders - Anorexia, Bulimia and Compulsive Eating, and yet we see and hear from so many women in society who are adversely affected by a range of food and weight concerns, but don't neatly slot into the definitions of the above clinical eating disorders.

If we consider an iceberg and think of the tip (above the water) we can think of anorexia, bulimia and compulsive eating. However, the total iceberg (including that which is unseen) is the truer and indeed 'bigger' picture. The total iceberg needs melting down if we are ever eradicate the tip and work towards solving these issues for women. Within this total picture may be women who are constantly plagued by fear and self-loathing about their bodies. We see women who may constantly feel guilty about what they eat. There are also women who spend enormous amounts of their lives dieting, and worrying about how to lose weight and/or change shape. Some people vomit or starve occasionally, take laxatives to lose weight or go through periods of excessive exercise. All of these people lose a great deal of their lives to an eating disorder, and yet often remain invisible, struggling in silence, because their plight is not named and they do not fit the 'tip' of the iceberg.

Within the total iceberg, we also have a range of ideas/notions about beauty and women's shape and appearance. Namely we have very rigid ideals about how a woman should look and what body type she should aspire to. There are those within this bigger picture who may embody such ideals and contribute to eating disorders without ever manifesting problems themselves. In a sense, eating disorders speak through individuals and may encourage one to either hurt oneself in this way, or to hurt others.

Naming these issues in this way is of utmost

importance, as so much of this is 'normalised' and considered acceptable. How often do we hear women 'moralise' food and discuss food with guilt and a sense of sin? How often do we hear women denigrate their own or others' bodies? How many women can feel truly free to eat what their body really desires and to love their body for how it feels, rather than how it looks and what it represents to others? We do know that there is never any one simple cause of an eating disorder. Rather a



number of influences interact to contribute to their development. As is obvious to most people, society and media are a big contributor, politics contributes as does family and the individual's own particular personality. On a societal level, as discussed, we have rigid ideals about size and shape for women. We rarely see a woman in the media who is not size 8 or 10. Our so-called supermodels and other TV personalities are usually taller than the average woman is, and the most common woman's shape is 'the pear shape', is rarely represented. With computerised photography, images of women's bodies are airbrushed, lengthened, waists can be brought in, legs can be lengthened, and spots/blemishes/cellulite can be taken out of the picture.

Subtly over time, we learn to measure ourselves on these false templates. We forget, or have not been told, that they are unreal, and

we subtly begin to despise what it means to be 'normal', both for others and ourselves. The body in the mirror does not match the template ideal. Somehow we are flawed and we need to buy 1001 different products, go on numerous diets and participate in rigid exercise regimes to change ourselves and to combat our flawed existence.

Politically, the beauty industry is not interested in promoting ideas to make women feel powerful and acceptable. The beauty industry, including the diet industry, makes millions of dollars each day. Can we imagine an economy without women's contributions in the form of this beauty consumption? Who, in advertising, would be interested in women's self-worth? Advertising plays on human vulnerability. It needs to have us believe that we need to purchase something, to become 'better' people. When that purchase violates our very right to our inherited natural beauty, we have set up a war and women's bodies become the enemy, to be controlled, manipulated, silenced and sometimes eradicated.

We also have certain notions and stereotypes about what it means to be big or small; small people are often considered to be more vulnerable and worthy of help and support. While larger people are considered to have 'robust' personalities and should be 'jolly' and self-sufficient. We hear almost every day that people with eating disorder issues do not feel heard by others unless their 'symptoms' conform to an emaciated or sickly looking state. People are often reluctant to get on well because their 'symptom' may have been their only voice, in a society that is often deaf to cries of authentic pain.

It is vitally important with eating disorders not to make 'size' the issue. Many eating disorder sufferers can manifest anorexia one year and compulsive eating symptoms the next. The underlying issues, struggles with life and individual pains are still the same, regardless of body size and shape.

We need to help people name the issues that effect them, whether that are society's unjust treatment of women's bodies, painful family issues, past traumas and/or grief, or a general confusion about coping with life. It is very difficult to step away from the clutches of an

Eating Disorders

eating disorder until other issues have been named and a person is supported to find ways to cope with them.

Blaming and pathologizing the individual is never effective. If I am 'eating disordered' then I am ill and in need of curing. If I am a person hooked into a relationship with an eating disorder, I can learn to strengthen myself to leave it behind, or I can learn to see through its tactics and realise that it seduced me at a vulnerable time, its promises were false and I'm now interested in reclaiming my life from its effects.

To understand eating disorders it is often useful to look at the behaviour symbolically, rather than literally. For example, why is it so frightening for this person to have a woman's body? Why does this person feel so undeserving of nourishment? When this person vomits, what is it that they may be starving for?

From our experience at ABNA people who experience eating disorders have a wealth of gifts in many areas, are very intelligent and

capable women and do not appreciate being pathologized and labelled as sick. Labels begin with their preconceived assumptions and we begin to see certain traits/behaviours that are not even there. It is far more useful to be a humble observer and let the person speak for herself, or let the symptom speak for the person.

There is a lot of work to do in the melting down the iceberg. False dieting practices need challenging and people need access to more accurate information about food and weight, physical images of women need challenging, and we all need to be accountable for how we buy into this ideal and how we affect others as eating disorder channels through us. We need to challenge pathologizing ways of seeing people that render them sick and abnormal, for these practices only serve to mask the very contributors that if challenged may eventually lose their power.

Contact ABNA for more information. ABNA stock a range of printed resources for those

experiencing eating disorders, their family and friends, as well as students and health professional. ABNA also convenes supports groups for people experiencing eating disorders, their friends and family. There is a support, information and referral telephone helpline and appointments can also be made to come in to chat over any concerns. The ABNA can help provide referral information for those wanting longer-term assistance. Membership benefits include the use of a book and audiotape library as well as a quarterly newsletter and discounts for groups/workshops/seminars. ABNA also delivers educated talks to community groups by request.

Trecia Spowart
ABNA Board Member

Telephone (08) 8212 1644
Fax (08) 8212 7991

Virtually Perfect?

Reading about Webbie Tookay, the new "internet model", engineered to eradicate the need for "real" women to model clothes on the internet, I recalled a cartoon I saw many years ago when I was first noticing, and becoming outraged about, the portrayal of women in the media.

The cartoon was titled "The Perfect Woman", and it depicted a voluptuous woman - I can't remember if she was naked or scantily clad - who had, instead of a head, a drinks tray on which rested a freshly poured, inviting looking beer.

Displaying clothing on a mannequin rather than a real live person is nothing new. Stylised pictures of impossibly perfect women modelling clothes are nothing new. Even real live "super-models", while a relatively new phenomenon, have been with us for several years now.

So what is different about a virtual reality model on the internet? The difference is in the way this model is marketed. Elite Model Management, the company which devised

and designed Tookay for her launch in July, is promoting her as if she were a real woman, only "better". The advantages of Tookay over a live model are many, the company claims: no studio, no make-up artist, no hairstylist, no manager, no lawyers and no boyfriend. Elite spokesperson Miguel Avalos says Tookay will even have a personality: "She will have her own opinions...she will be a conscious person person." But don't get any ideas about individuality. Avalos says "[Tookay] will conform to the type of personality the client wants".

John Casablancas, Elite's chief executive, was even more blunt. "like most men, I wanted a woman who would be physical perfection without the mental and verbal grief", he said. "[Tookay is] the ultimate perfect woman, and she never talks back."

This guy must have real problems relating to women.

That this misogynist crap has, on the whole, been taken and reported seriously (there were just a few send-ups in the opinion sections of

establishment papers), is a worrying indicator of how far the backlash against feminism has come in the last decade. Of the half dozen or so articles I have seen on the topic of Tookay, only one, by a male writer, has been really critical of the overt message being presented by Elite Model Management.

Stephen Romei, the *Australian* newspaper's New York correspondent, wrote about the negative impact on women and girls of the quest for an impossible body shape. Replying to Casablancas' assertion that Tookay is the perfect woman who never talks back, Romei says: "That's a woman no girl should ever grow up to be".

I have the solution to Casablancas' personal quest for the perfect female - an ideal match for him, physically and intellectually. She's long, lean, beautiful, athletic, requires a bit of grooming, but never complains or talks back. Her name is Shelly and she's running at 16-1 at the greyhound raceway.

Margaret Allum

Women of all Nations

When discussing equality between the sexes and feminism, I am often startled and dismayed by how many people (both men and women) feel that feminism is outdated. They argue that the issues of inequality that first prompted the women's movement have been solved. Women have the vote, women have access to all forms of education, women are treated equally under the law (supposedly). In Australia, and many countries this

is true. Women are afforded the same basic human rights as men. However, not all women enjoy the freedom that we do.

As a member of Amnesty International, I'm often lobbying governments and regimes to improve human rights within their country. When reading the sadly all too many cases of human rights abuses, it often strikes me that if those same people who argue that feminism is outdated

or irrelevant could only know the truth about the appalling condition that women face, they would reconsider their views.

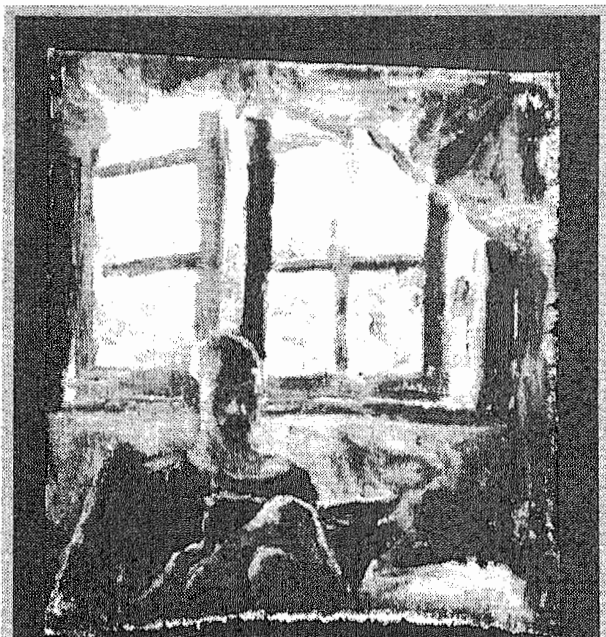
East Timor is on the minds of most of you reading this. Hopefully, by the time this is printed, the situations will not be so appalling. Hopefully the governments of the world will stop talking and act against a regime arguably as appalling as Hitlers, Stalins or Milosovics. At the time of writing, reports have come out that the refugees sheltering in the UN compound are mainly women and children. If nothing is done to help the situation these are the people who will be tortured, raped and slaughtered. Nothing new there! Indonesia has an appalling record of human rights abuses not only towards its

citizens but towards East Timorese. Example 1: In 1992 a woman factory worker labour activist was arrested, taken into custody beaten and raped. The next morning two more soldiers raped her. A third soldier raped her twice and was heard to boast "Go ahead and report us to the commander. He's not going to do a thing. This is our right."

Example 2: After Indonesia illegally invaded East Timor, the military would often use civilians as "human shields" to prevent opposition forces firing back at the military. On the 17th of October 1978, the Indonesian military advanced on Fretilin troops, using civilian shields including elderly men, children and pregnant women.

It isn't just Indonesia who abuses human rights and women. China for example is probably the worst offender of human rights abuses. There are thousands of stories concerning brutality against women in China. Tibetan Buddhist nuns are routinely raped by soldiers and have electrically charged rods inserted in their vaginas which then gives severe electrical shocks and burns. China's one child policy has also led to forced abortions on women. You may remember around 3 months ago 60 minutes did a report of a Chinese woman deported from Australia who had a forced abortion back in China when she was more than 8 months pregnant.

Perhaps the most extreme cases of human rights abuses upon women are committed in Taliban controlled Afghanistan. The Taliban are a fundamentalist Islamic Group and like any fundamentalist are very dangerous. They pervert what the Koran says and mould what it does say to their own belief system.



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The Taliban have murdered thousands of people, and beaten just as many severely. Under Taliban rule a women can be beaten for having nail polish on, wearing make up, showing their face in public or the hair or for not wearing the body length cloth covering that covers every part of them. This includes their faces, every women must wear cloth over her head and face, with only a mesh square to look out of.

Women under Taliban rule are forbidden to work, to be educated and to have medical attention. Virtually every human right that the UN Declaration of Human Rights Treaty defines is ignored.

These examples should not give you the impression that human rights abuses are only committed against women in less developed nations. In Japan for example, it took women 26 years to have the ability to take the pill legally. Yet Viagra was rushed through in six months. Women can't control their own body and fertility while old men who want to get horny can start slapping the salami virtually straight away.

The US is Amnesty International's most recent target country. You would think in a country such as the US - the land of the free and the plenty etc that human rights would be damn good! Think again.

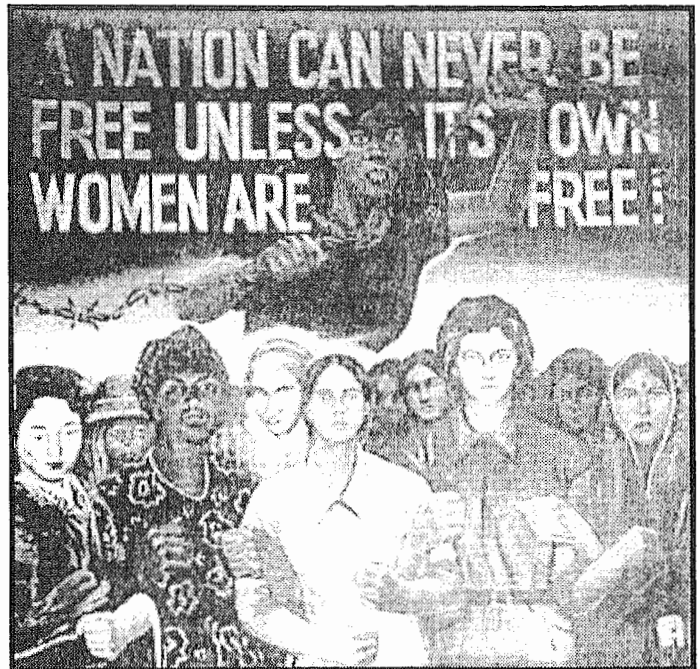
There have been numerous reports of officers sexually molesting women illegal immigrants or suspected drug couriers when they are in detention. In prisons also, women are sexually assaulted by prison wardens. While giving birth, female prisoners were also chained to the bed. Like she was going to make a getaway halfway through labour!

After reading this you may feel like there is nothing you can do. WRONG. Become active! Due to the letter writing campaigns Amnesty International organised they sufficiently pressured the US government to stop chaining women while they have birth. In Indonesia Dita Sari, a union activist was recently freed due in part to Amnesty's work. Throughout the world there are stories like this.

If you would like to get involved in Amnesty International, there is an Adelaide Uni group, or you can phone the State Amnesty International group or Vista at the Torrens Building in Victoria Square, where the head Office is situated.

Remember the Amnesty International motto: "Don't curse the darkness, light a candle instead".

Shoona Howard



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Women in Parliament

While applauding the greater equity of increased women's representation in the Australian Parliament, feminists such as Eva Cox have suggested that the increase has had disappointing outcomes. Ms Cox has argued that the increasing number of women in Federal Parliament has not resulted in any discernible change in policy or in the type of legislation that is passed.

Ms Cox is giving a false message. In the first place, she equates her own agenda with women's agendas generally. But even accepting her belief that what she wants is what all women want, she has revealed a lack of understanding not only of the outcomes of the last years, but also of the parliamentary process as it involves policy and legislation.

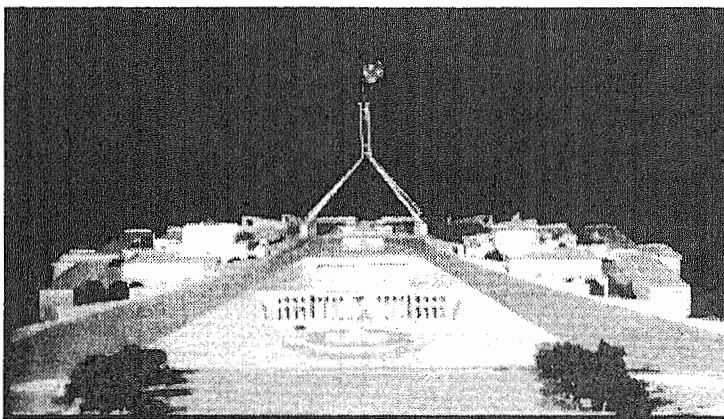
In the United States there is clear evidence that increasing the number of women in legislatures have brought about a change in the type of legislation emanating from the various legislatures.

In 1991 Sue Thomas studied the relationship between the number of women in US legislatures and policy priorities. Thomas found *'that women in states with the highest percentages of female representatives introduce and pass more priority bills dealing with issues of women, children and families than men in their states and more than their female counterparts in low representation legislatures.'*

Would that it were so simple in Australia! Unlike the US, Australian members of parliament do not put

forward their own bills. Our legislation comes from the cabinet is approved by the party room, and is introduced into parliament as government legislation.

If we had the US system, I suspect a repeat of Thomas' work would reveal similar outcomes. But before we all



start lobbying for a more US type system in Australia we need to be aware of the negative outcomes of this legislative independence on women and on women's issues. Because individual members introduce their own legislation they are at the mercy of their local constituencies and big business.

Big business, such as the tobacco lobby, pressures members to put forward legislation supporting their interests. They can threaten careers by withdrawing funds from non-complying parliamentarians, or simply by bankrolling opponents. Geographical lobby groups are no better, threatening to withdraw votes and mounting campaigns against legislators who refuse to pander to their particular interests. The parliamentarian who comes from a tobacco growing area and doesn't support the

tobacco lobby will soon find the votes of the workers have gone the same way as election funds.

Back to the Australian Parliament. Rather than introducing their own legislation, as women do in the US, women in Australian parliaments change the sensibilities of their party

rooms Liberal, Labor and Democrat. Change is not sudden, but the result of women continually raising issues of importance to them and making their male colleagues recognise the validity of those issues. Numbers are important. Twenty women in a party room can accomplish much more than two.

At the beginning of this decade, when women in parliament were rare, it was quite difficult to get

female issues on the agenda. Firstly, there weren't many of us to raise issues and give support to each other. Secondly, we couldn't always rely on other women for support, and indeed some women were more aggressively male in the issues they pursued than some of the men.

Recently I came across the work by Elizabeth Kanter. Although Kanter's work wasn't on women, the results help explain why a relatively large group of women is necessary to get women's issues onto the agenda. It also explains why some women never seem to support other women. In the 1970s Kanter looked at how minorities functioned in the workplace. In an article published in the American Journal Psychology in 1977, Kanter examined the interactions within corporate sales forces between the majority group and the members of an ethnic minority.

Kanter found that members of the minority group were considered outsiders and not part of the 'club'. The large homogeneous group regarded members of the minority group as "different" and because of their perceived differences, also 'aberrant'. In response, some of the members of the minority took on the mores and values of the larger group. In this way, their differences were minimised and they achieved greater acceptance.

Kanter's research indicated that once the minority group became larger, not only were members of the minority group more likely to support each other, but there was also increasing acceptance of the legitimacy of the differences and

values of the minority by the larger group.

Something similar has happened in the last decade in Australian political forums. Buoyed by increasing numbers, women parliamentarians are now more likely to take on men who display ignorance and lack appropriate understanding of key issues that involve women. In the party room of old, a particularly female perspective may have elicited outright hostility, the odd snigger or a few snide comments. Any man who attempts a snide comment today is likely himself to be seen as 'aberrant'.

Does that mean we have reached the critical number of women to really make a difference. Not nearly.

There are still too few women in parliament for women to be setting the agenda to the extent we would like. Women in parliamentary parties are just learning to flex their feminine muscles. As we get more of us into parliament we can expect more support for issues not of primary concern to men.

The more women there are within parliament, the more that women's views will be reflected in legislation. If we want more issues on the political agenda that are important to women, we don't need just women in parliament, but lots of women in parliament!

Chris Gallus MP

Chicks in Politicks

Politics is all about credibility. If there is any suspicion about the merit of parliamentarians their performance will suffer at the hands of suspicious bureaucrats, lobby groups, Parliamentary colleagues and the general public. That is why I do not support women being put forward for political positions to fill quotas or for any other reason apart from merit. Quotas are patronising and work against the objective of having more capable and believable women in demanding positions.

My male colleagues in Parliament expect me to cope with the rough and tumble of politics just like everybody else. No concessions are asked or given over issues such as the enormous time commitment to Canberra and an adversarial debating chamber. The media, however, is a different story when it comes to dealing with female politicians. Women get scrutinised about their private lives and fashion choices in a manner that no journalist would consider appropriate for males. This has the effect

of altering perceptions about the contribution of women in Parliament. It shifts the focus from questions of substance to trivia and diminishes our role and achievements. Female Politicians who choose to do fashion shoots or glamour photo sessions reinforce this and inflict damage to other female politicians trying to be taken seriously.

Obviously a parliament more representative of the gender balance in the community it seeks to represent would be ideal and would more accurately reflect changing social attitudes. But the problem is more complex than just getting 50 percent female representation. We need more women in positions where they can regularly influence policy direction - that is, in the Ministry and Cabinet - and where they can have long-term stability to affect long-term change - that is, in safe seats.

The question of whether women bring different qualities to politics to males is also a complex one. In my experience, women can be less

adversarial and less stubborn when it comes to admitting past mistakes. They also bring a less egocentric approach to negotiating outcomes. But this does not mean they are any less dedicated to their ideals or the policy changes they want to put into place. Clashes over competing ideals and agendas are not any less intense. Nor should they be!

I would encourage any women thinking of getting into politics to give it a go. Barriers do exist but they are far less now thanks to the female trailblazers of the past. What I would like to see is the normalisation of women in politics by the media, popular culture and the general public. The choice of women to enter Parliament, local councils, community organisations and action groups should be no less or more spectacular than a female deciding to raise children, start a small business or study.

Trish Worth MP

20th Century Women



Although Adelaide University opened in 1874 & admitted women students, it was not until 1881 that the University was able to confer Science degrees or to admit women to degrees. The Chancellor, Bishop Short, encouraged women students, Edith Emily Dornwell was awarded BSc in 1885- the first Science graduate as well as the first Woman Graduate. Schooling to matriculation was difficult for girls to obtain. Many women University students were unmatriculated.

By 1900 there were still only 24 Women Grads. In 1909 the University Women's Union was formed to "network" among past & present students. Various social activities were held, often men were invited. New Women Grads were honoured with a Commem Dinner. In July 1914 Dr Helen Mayo & others formed a separate subgroup, The Adelaide Women Graduates Club. This was the first such organisation of Women Grads in Australia. The "women had

a desperate need for a meeting room. In 1917 the University Council offered the use of a small cottage on the Western boundary of campus. This became the hub of women students' lives.

After WWI UK & USA Women graduates under the leadership of Prof Virginia Gildersleeve, set up the International Federation of University Women (IFUW).

Though spurred on by the desire for Peace, they also wanted to encourage women to reach their full potential. Through education, women can acquire the requisite skills to solve problems and take on leadership positions. IFUW has affiliated Associations or Individual Members in some 70 countries today. Triennial Conferences are

held, the most recent in Graz, Austria. AFUW: The Australian Federation of University Women, was formed in September 1922 at its Inaugural Conference held in Sydney. The Adelaide group was a founding member. In 1939, led by Dr Constance Davey & Dr Helen Mayo, the Adelaide Women Graduates separated from the University Union with a new constitution and a new name - the Adelaide University Women Graduates Association. Later on this became AFUW-SA, Incorporated since 1981. Key issues are Education, Status of Women, Human Rights, Peace & Conflict Resolution and quality of Life (Health, Welfare & Environment). Delegates to other organisations enable information exchange & assistance, though AFUW is not a Service Club. Federal conferences are held each triennium, the next in Adelaide April 2000.

Any woman normally resident in South Australia, with a degree or

equivalent award from an approved tertiary institution anywhere in the world is eligible to join AFUW(SA). An annual membership fee is charged, which includes affiliation with both the National & International Federations. Replacing the Commem Dinner of the early days, and the later 'Drinks & Nibbles', all new women grads of SA receive an invitation to take up Honorary Guest Membership immediately following their graduation. At the end of the current Membership-Year they are invited to join as full members. Post-graduate students receive a substantial discount.

Activities focus around IFUW's triennial Study & Action Program with special emphasis on SA concerns where appropriate. Monthly meetings may feature guest speakers, discussion groups or workshops, or may take the form of cultural or educational visits. Especially for those with busy schedules, the Breakfast Club meets one Monday morning in each month of Spring & Autumn. A Guest Speaker enables participants to keep informed about vital issues for today. The Cross-Campus Seminar Series, run in conjunction with Post-Graduate Students' Associations, provides opportunities for women post-grads to present aspects of their work in a friendly environment, promoting friendship & networking. All members are welcome to attend any functions. A bi-monthly newsletter keeps members informed of activities & Bursaries. Young Members may receive a half-yearly email newsletter.

In the early 1920s, a decision was made to set up a Bursary Fund. At first this was done by an extra levy, paid with the yearly subs. From 1935

Graduates in SA

Bursaries were supported by hiring academic dress to graduands for Commem ceremonies. As both men & women hired hoods & gowns, both men & women were eligible to apply for SA Bursaries. Until 1989 the AFUW committee did all administration, This is now handled by a separate group of Trustees. The work of gowning graduands has always been done by volunteers drawn from members & friends. Trust Fund Bursaries & Prizes are mainly for post-graduate study & not restricted to AFUW members. The Academic Dress Hire Service operates from Bonython Hall & available all year round by appointment, not just at Commem time. It is assisted by bequests & donations. The present aim is to distribute at least \$50,000 each year. Individual awards are not large but very important, often leading to greater recognition by more affluent sponsors. Across Australia, nearly \$200,000 is awarded annually by AFUW. AFUW(SA)Inc newsletters are available at the State Library, WSRC & University libraries. The IFUW Young Members newsletter can be seen on <http://www.ifuw.org>. AFUW(SA)Inc can be contacted via internal mail - Box 16 Adelaide University, and the National Association at Box 28 or email: afuw@mulga.adelaide.edu.au To subscribe to the Young Members list email a request to K.Mumford@utas.edu.au. The current National AFUW President is Dr D Elliott email: Daphne.Elliot@flinders.edu.au. AFUW(SA)Inc President email is Margaret.Messenger@flinders.edu.au.

Brenda Nettle

Australian Federation of University Women - SA Inc invites you to attend our general meetings and activities.

October:

General Meeting

Guest Speaker: Senator Natasha Stott Despoja

Topic: "Issues in education for women from a political perspective"

When: 7.30pm, Tuesday October 5th

Where: North Dining Room, Union Building, University of Adelaide

Cost: \$ 1.00 donation for venue hire, tea,coffee,biscuits

Dinner - Please join us for dinner in The Equinox prior to the meeting at 6.00pm - please book with Suzette Jansen 8379 8552.

November:

Theatre Visit: Twelfth Night

When: 6.30pm, Monday 1st November

Where: Playhouse, Festival Centre

Cost: \$30.00

To book contact Kate Twidale 83394787 by 31st August

Annual General Meeting

Guest Speaker: Philip Gammage, Early Childhood Education, de Lissa Institute, UniSA

When: 7.30pm, Tuesday 23 November

Where: Margaret Murray Room, Level 5 Union Building, Adelaide University

Cost: \$1.00 donation for venue hire, tea,coffee,biscuits

Dinner - Please join us for dinner in The Equinox prior to the meeting at 6.00pm - please book with Suzette Jansen 8379 8552.

Bronwen Whyatt

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NOWSA

More than 600 women gathered in Melbourne for the Network of Women Students in Australia (NOWSA) conference from July 16 - 20.

NOWSA is the largest gathering of student feminists in Australia, and is an important forum for discussing the women's liberation movement. This year's conference included many constructive debates on topics such as abortion, prostitution, and issues for working women.

The conference began with a discussion about the different strands within the feminist movement: Marxism, radical feminism, liberalism and socialist feminism. The discussion enabled women coming to the conference to participate in debates in a political context. This was important because the organising collective for the conference was dominated by separatist and identity politics.

Collective members tried to impose their perspective on the conference by excluding transgender women, arguing that it is necessary to be a lesbian in order to be a feminist, that sex work should be criminalised and that NOWSA was plagued by 'racism'. In contrast Marxist feminists argued that women-only space should be open to all who want to fight for women's liberation, including transgender women, and women who have sex with men. Unfortunately, these debates were carried out in an intimidating and confrontational atmosphere.

Women who disagreed with the positions put forward by the NOWSA collective were labelled 'racists'. During one of the plenary sessions, the audience was asked to sit in racially segregated areas: Anglo background people divided from non-Anglo background people. When a few white women arrived late and sat on the non-Anglo side, a collective member told them to stick to 'their' side of the room because they were corrupting 'her' autonomous space.



Vicki-Anne Speechley Golden, an Aboriginal speaker, sparked a vigorous debate by stating that all white people, including those in the audience, were responsible for the rise of Pauline Hanson. A collective member then read a statement which attacked conference participants, labelling them 'racist' for disagreeing with Aboriginal speakers. The label 'racist' was used to obscure healthy debate about different political strategies.

Intimidation was also used inside the NOWSA collective. Before the conference, a collective member was expelled from the collective when she disagreed with the rest of their identity politics. During the conference, another collective member was expelled during a meeting at which she was not present, for alleged 'racism'.

Underlying the conflict at this year's NOWSA were two main strategies. The first was the belief that the "experience of oppression" is the determining factor in being able to fight it. That the most important part of "fighting" oppression, is that oppressor groups (men or white people) "own their racism" and "sexism". By contrast, the other argument was that to overcome oppression it is imperative to first find the cause of that oppression. This means that all people brought up in this racist, sexist and homophobic society are infused with these prejudices. Racism is not created by individuals but by a system which profits from the denial of Aboriginal land rights and the exploitation of migrant labour. Therefore arguing that conference participants should "own their racism" lets the real racists in society off the hook. Even if all feminists strove to "own their racism", racism would still exist, because without political action aimed at attacking the economic basis of racial oppression, injustice and discrimination would continue to thrive.

The feminist movement needs to build alliances with other movements of the oppressed for their liberation, particularly the anti-racism movement. These alliances need to be built through discussion, solidarity and common action.

Throughout the conference, Non-English Speaking Background (NESB) and Aboriginal women who raised problems with the

collective's perspective's were told it was "racist" to disagree because the collective was supported by a particular group of indigenous women. Asserting that anybody has a monopoly on the right to speak in the movement, and enforcing this by the threat of ostracism and isolation, is destructive.

One of the NOWSA collective's most controversial decisions was to exclude transgender women from the collective. Many feminists opposed this decision. Knowing when it went in to the conference that it had already lost this debate, the collective did its utmost to avoid discussion of the issue. Collective members refused to answer questions from the floor about their exclusion of transgender women, and one collective member asserted that the women wanting to discuss the issue were being racist for ignoring her issues.

The NOWSA collective imposed a quota system at the conference which stipulated that 50% of all speakers had to have NESB or indigenous backgrounds. Although the collective was successful in promoting the experiences of NESB and indigenous women, the quota system was criticised for being tokenistic, because rather than being asked to speak because of their political opinions or activism, they were asked to speak because of their skin colour to help fill the quota.

At the end of the conference, the collective decided to bid for NOWSA to be held in Melbourne again next year. This was rejected by more than 60% of conference participants, who voted for the next NOWSA to be in Adelaide. Despite the collective's intimidation and undemocratic procedures, many women left the conference with increased confidence and determination to fight both racism and sexism. The overwhelming sentiment of those who attended was that it is possible to build alliances between different oppressed groups and, when we work together, we can fight for our liberation.

Lisa Lines



Weapons of War: Bodies as Bullets

You should know by now that in the last 23 years, while the Indonesian military has occupied East Timor, more than a third of the population has died. What this horrific fact doesn't reveal is the effect of this war on the women in East Timor, who have been subject to every kind of violence, humiliation and mistreatment available to Indonesia's army, one of the world's largest military forces. The war in East Timor is one played out on gender lines, where the battlefields are women's bodies.

Emilia Baptista Gusmao, wife of the most well-known Resistance leader; Xanana Gusmao, was often picked up in the middle of the night to be interrogated. The soldiers told her to write a letter to Xanana and his comrades, urging them to surrender. Sometimes they threatened her by pointing a gun to her head. Other times they tried a softer tactic, suggesting she move to Jakarta for the sake of the children's education... On May 25, 1993, three years after settling in Melbourne, she wept when speaking publicly of the child she bore by an Indonesian army officer, after the Indonesian military took over her home in Dili. Her child had died. On Radio National, she described the experience with the Indonesian officer as the worst of her life. Yet, she grieved when the child died and said she would carry the grief of the dead child all her life, "because that child was my child".

(G. Aditjondro, Violence by the State Against Women in East Timor, East Timor Human Rights Centre, 7.11.97)

Rape as a weapon of war

Rape is the most common form of gendered violence systematically perpetrated by the military in any war. Historians and the media, however, tend to focus on the male experience of militarism, located on the battlefields. The women of East Timor suffer rape in addition to the routine imprisonment, torture, beating and extra-judicial (not sanctioned by a court of law) execution that is the everyday reality for all East Timorese. Since the invasion, stories like the one above have been documented and submitted to various Human Rights Commissions. The United Nations and the world's leading powers have not backed any significant action against the illegal occupation of East Timor,

though, and unsurprisingly, little has come of attempts to bring war criminals and serial rapists to justice.

There are several reasons for this (Aditjondro, p.2). Firstly, women in East Timor who are raped are often trapped in a circle of silence and shame. Typically, women have little opportunity to move beyond the domestic sphere, and have an extremely low level of education. Almost 2/3 of adult women and 1/2 of adult men have never attended any kind of school, and of those women that have, the median duration of schooling is one year (M. Sissons, From One Day to Another: Violations of Women's Reproductive and Sexual Rights in East Timor, ETHRC, 1997). Since the invasion, the structure of society has changed with many men being killed, "disappearing" or vanishing into the mountains to fight or hide. This has put the onus on women to provide for their often large families on top of their traditional gender roles of domestic and agricultural labour. Water is often five kilometres walk away, fresh water being available in towns only for two hours every couple of days. These increased burdens and responsibilities naturally serve to further weaken the exhausted. With high unemployment and few skills to rely on, women have increasingly turned to prostitution. This is sometimes explained as a "post-rape consequence".

This is a way ... for them to survive. It's a very common thing in Timor, if the father has passed away and they have a family. It's not that they want to become prostitutes, but they are forced to do it because if they don't, the others are going to get killed. So they're forced to do certain things with them. If the mother doesn't do it, they go to the daughters, or to the younger daughters.

(Sissons, p.31)

Rape is a method of silencing, frightening and dividing the people. Rape is used to retaliate for suspected resistance involvement. Women whose husbands are absent are often kept as sexual slaves or "local wives" to Indonesian soldiers, particularly those known to be guerrilla leaders in the resistance (for surveillance purposes as well as to compromise the integrity of the women and destabilise support for the resistance). The use of "comfort women" has demoralised and

divided this humble, predominantly Catholic society where virginity is still highly valued.

It is very bad, because we can't lose our virginity in this culture. The value of women in society is very low. No one will marry you, everyone will know you, [and] tease you, and there is no counselling for them, they just lead this life.

(Sissons, p.32)

There is a legacy of children from these relationships, both free and forced, that have been abandoned by the Indonesian fathers at the end of their tour of duty. This has further ruptured "the fabric of society", and there is no support network in existence to help individuals and the community to cope.

Genocide through forced contraception

Genocide through forced contraception can be encoded in the language of population control. Indonesia's President Suharto has twice been awarded the \$12,000 United Nations Prize for responsible Population Control. This is a typical adherence of the West to a doctrine that blames third-world women for overpopulation of the planet without analysing patterns of consumption. That 10% of the world uses 90% of global resources is more of a problem than an East Timorese woman wanting to have a family in a self-sufficient tribal society that receives no state welfare.

Women's reproductive and sexual rights and the rights of children are enshrined in a variety of covenants, declarations, conventions and treaties. Although Indonesia is not a signatory to some of these, it is in some cases bound by the customary norms of international law (see Sissons, pp. 2-4).

While the debate continues to rage in Australia about women's rights to reproductive choice, it is worth remembering that a woman's rights to life, to safety, to have a family and to reproductive freedoms are a matrix that go beyond the issue of access to free, safe and legal abortion on demand. Emancipation is a global project, keep changing those laws.

Extract reprinted from Farrago (Uni of Melbourne student newspaper); Edition #3.

Not the F- Word!!

Feminism has become a very misunderstood, very distorted concept. This is something I cannot understand, when I believe it should be mere common sense. The term feminist has become a derogatory term, a term to be feared, when women should be adopting it proudly.

Why are people afraid of it? Feminism is not about man-hating. Far from it, feminism is enabling women to live in a world alongside men, but with enough power of their own to exist comfortably with them. Being a feminist does not mean you have to stop shaving under your arms, start shaving your head or wear butch clothes. A feminist does not have to do any of these things, she can look however she wants. Which would be the point, feminism enables us to choose to do any of these things, to look however we like, rather than conforming to an outdated feminine stereotype.

This is the biggest underlying point

of feminism. It gives us the right to choose. In no way is feminism a rigid structure of beliefs, it draws on many sources, and its aim is woman's right to choose. That is, a woman's right to choose how she looks, what career she has, what education she receives, who she has sex with, whether she has children, and to be safe in her life. I don't think that anyone can disagree with my earlier suggestion, that this sounds like common sense to me.

Feminism today has drawn on many influences, and some understandings of feminism have more rigid belief structures. Women also have the right to identify themselves as one or several of these concepts, or to draw what they need from these movements. Women can choose to identify as radical feminists, Marxist feminists, liberal feminists or separatist feminists, and it is the input of all of these different, and equally valuable ideas which has brought the place of

women so far since the 60s. A woman can adopt one of these labels, or take what she needs from each of them, so she feels comfortable with her own form of feminism. One can add any of these ideas to your own feminist beliefs. But in the simplest way, if you believe in equal pay regardless of gender, if you believe in equal access to university, if you believe a woman should have control over her own reproductive organs, if you believe a woman should be able to form a partnership with whoever she likes, then you are a feminist.

Feminism means that I, and all women, can be self-determining, that we can have all the opportunities available to men that we should, that we are equal to men in our relationships, in our workplaces and in our university. Take it up with pride, and say it, no matter how scary it may seem at first "I am a feminist".

Alexis Tindall



Girls who like girls who like boys who like girls....



“Sexuality, strong and warm and wild and free
Sexuality, your laws do not apply to me
Sexuality, come and eat and drink and sleep with me
Sexuality, we can be what we cant to be ...”, *Sexuality* Billy Bragg

Ok, I think we have exceeded our allowances of boy quotes in Elle Dit with that one, but I think you get the idea. We are at university, surrounded by a hormonally charged bunch of young and not-so-young people, the concept of sexuality was going to arise at some point. Female sexuality is an intriguing, wonderful, misunderstood, often ignored thing. Women have sex. This is a pretty straight forward suggestion, and I am sure no one would contradict me when I say it. There are many issues which arise from it, however. Women have sex with who they want to have sex with. Whether a girl chooses to have sex with a boy, another girl, herself, a boy today and a girl tomorrow or not to have sex at all, is her choice. How many partners

she has is her choice, how often she has sex is her choice as well. It is not anyone's right to judge anyone else for how, with who, or how often they have sex. There are women who define themselves as heterosexual, lesbian, queer, bisexual and celibate, as well as many shades of grey in between, and each of these is a choice about their own life, and it is a woman's right to make that choice without criticism from anyone. Women have fought for centuries to gain the right to control of their own bodies, and this fight, for some reason, is still going on, as a woman who uses her body how she wants to is often criticised for being too sexually active, not sexually active enough, or just not fitting to some misconceived stereotype. Women use contraception. The freedom to have sex without conceiving a child is the right of every woman, and it is the shame of medical science that in the 90s there is still no 100% effective form of contraception. Reproductive freedom is essential to sexual freedom for women, and to freedom for women in general.

Women must have safe sex. Whether it be with a boy, a girl or whoever you choose, protection is an extremely important part of sexuality. Condoms and dental dams should be part of the fun.

Women should only have sex when they have given consent. Sex without consent is a crime, and sexual assault is a very real threat to all women. Listen to her, accept no for an answer, understand that there are other ways of saying no, and especially “If you don't ask, the answer's no”.

Women's health is a part of women's sexuality. If you are sexually active at all, make sure you have had a pap smear, cervical cancer is a very real threat to women of all ages, and have an STD test while you are at it. Look after your body, and you can have more fun with it.

So go forth, have sex, if you want, or not if you don't want to. As empowered women it is your right to choose. So, as long as it is safe, and you are enjoying it, have sex with whomever, however you like.

Alexis Tindall





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For further information please contact:

Associate Professor Siva Sivapalan

Postgraduate Coordinator

Department of Environmental Engineering

Centre for Water Research

Tel: 08 9380 2320 Email: sivapalan@cwr.uwa.edu.au

www.cwr.uwa.edu.au



Spirit

For in her is a spirit that is intelligent, holy, unique, manifold, subtle, mobile, clear, unpolluted, distinct, invulnerable, loving the good, keen, irresistible, beneficent, humane, steadfast, sure, free from anxiety, all powerful, overseeing all and penetrating through all spirits that are intelligent and pure and most subtle. For wisdom is more mobile than any motion; because of her pureness she pervades and penetrates all things. For she is a breath of the power of God, and a pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty; therefore nothing defiled gains entrance into her. For she is a reflection of eternal light, a spotless mirror of the working of God and an image of His goodness. Though she is but one, she can do all things; and while remaining in herself, she renews all things; in every generation she passes into holy souls and makes them friends of God, and prophets; For loves nothing so much as the [one] who lives with wisdom. For she is more beautiful than the sun, and excels every constellation of the stars. Compared with the light she is found to be superior; For it is succeeded by the night, but against wisdom evil does not prevail. She reaches mightily from one end of the earth to the other and she orders all things well. (from the Book of Wisdom of Solomon)

Try reading it out loud, replacing "she" with "I".

The Descent by Chapel of Change



Chapel of Change is theatre and dance company with a manifesto to enhance and embrace our connectedness to all people regardless of race or dialogue. A company with an intriguing international performance history, having performed on some of the largest stages in the world, some of the most ancient stages, and also on some of the most barren sites in the world, is soon to perform in Adelaide by special arrangement with Tandanya Aboriginal Cultural Institute. The company, Chapel of Change, is an internationally respected award winning contemporary theatre and dance company working in visually orientated physical theatre forms, which can be identified universally without language barriers. The company is making its first visit to Adelaide with *The Descent*, a work that received an Australian Green Room nomination for Best Direction. After premiering *The Descent* at the Playbox Malthouse in Melbourne, and an acclaimed season in Perth, where Jan Murray described it in the West Australian as a 'magical 85

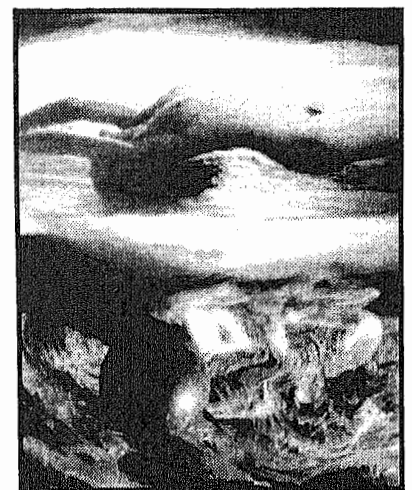
minute experience not to be missed". *The Descent* was invited to Egypt to open the 9th Cairo International Festival, on the Cairo Opera House stage for the Egyptian Ministry of Culture and 3500 guests. There, at the Cairo Festival an International Jury awarded Rainsford Best Male Performer. *The Descent* also received an Honourable Mention for Scenography from the Association of Theatre Critics in Cairo. As well, the entire 85 minutes of *The Descent* was broadcast on Egyptian national television to an estimated audience of over half a million people. A rare event for any live dance theatre works any where in the world. The company was also invited to Turkey where *The Descent* was performed at Darphane, in Topkapi Palace, Istanbul. Chapel of Change became the first Australian Dance Theatre Company to be officially invited to both Egypt and Turkey. 1998 saw Chapel of Change on a second history making tour of the Middle East and France with *The Descent*. Supported by the Australian Embassy in Beirut and Malaysian Airlines, Chapel of Change's *The Descent* became the first Australian production to be staged in Lebanon since the civil war.

The history of this work and the attention it has received in the Middle East is made even more remarkable by the context of the work: *The Descent* is a journey of spiritual liberation, it becomes an evocation of a woman left lonely after the death of her fisherman husband, she searches for understanding and finally freed and empowered, she integrates her soul with Mother Earth. The final scene emphasises light and reconciliation.

Freedom for women can come in

many forms, and is relative and personal. In the Middle East we are reminded that the plight of women is far from over, there many women are culturally subjected to abuse and mistreatment under the guise of cultural and religious identity, it is refreshing to hear that an Australian work that challenges the notion of women as spiritual subjects has been embraced with such a sense of courage by the various festivals and arts organisations in the Middle East. *The Decent* is a universal work, its setting is somewhere on the edge of a dark ocean. Mary Salem, a central performer in *The Descent*, insists that it is a humble work, saying that "the reward for a patron experiencing *The Descent* is to leave the theatre having been nourished by a work that has been created with a sincerity and a truth, and therefore all the magic and make-believe that comes from an expression of heart".

With an international touring program for Chapel of Change extending into the year 2001, the only performances of *The Descent* in Australia this year will be at Tandanya on 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 25th and the 26th of September at 8pm.



STUDENT CARE INC: WHAT IS IT? WHAT DOES IT DO?

Student Care Inc is an affiliate body of the Adelaide University Union, encompassing the services of the Education and Welfare Officers, (EWOS), and the Housing and Loans Officer. Student Care is located on the Ground Floor of the Lady Symon Building.

Housing Officer

Alyson Seidel

The Housing Officer has primary responsibility for the day to day running of the Non Collegiate Housing scheme. For those uncertain, NCH is affordable housing provided to undergraduate students, (usually limited to first years), considered to be in financial and social need. NCH housing is supported and supplemented by the University so student expenses are relatively low. Alyson additionally maintains up to date private rental listings for students, and she can advise on a range of housing options for students, including information on the SA Housing Trust Student Housing scheme.

Education and Welfare Services:

Karen Walker, Vicki McCoy and Chris Gent. (Chris is male by the way):

As our title suggests, we are involved in providing a range of services relevant to aimed at improving student welfare. We provide assistance and advice in relation to:

- Youth Allowance and Austudy
- General Centrelink queries
- Academic grievances
- Supplementary exams and extensions
- Financial problems, (including assessment for loans and small grants)
- Personal and health issues

Over the last 2 years we have increasingly expanded our services to include a number of on-going programs. We have set up an extensive **Peer Support Program** in the Arts and Science faculties, which will be taken up by Engineering in 2000. We established a

Sole Parent Support Network with the aim of linking sole parents studying at Adelaide University. Involvement with the Observatory child care centre has seen the establishment of a **Vacation Care Program**, for children of staff and students (see advertisement in this issue). With the support of the Union catering services we have established a **'Food-bank'**, whereby left over food is packaged up, frozen and given out as meals to Sole parents, (and other students in need????)

A **Grow Group** which assists people in dealing with various 'life crises', has been running, on campus, for over a year. If you would like further details on any of the above programs contact us on

83035430 / 83035915.

We welcome in-put from students and encourage you to drop in anytime.

For further information visit our website at www.adelaide.edu.au/AUU/student_care



THE OBSERVATORY

CHILD CARE CENTRE

Do you need care for your children during the up-coming school holiday period?? The Observatory Child Care Centre now offers a Vacation Care program for Primary School age children of staff and students. The program is auspiced by the Observatory, and run by qualified staff from the centre. Vacation Care has been offered during the last 2 school holiday periods this year, and has been very well received by both parents and children. The daily cost covers all excursions and food (If you are eligible for Child Care Assistance this will reduce the cost! Child Care Centre staff can explain eligibility criteria to you.) In short, very affordable and safe fun!! You can see the programme by contacting the Education and Welfare Officers. Numbers are limited and demand has been high, so please make bookings early, by contacting Shelly Hutcheson 83033076 or Robyn Moore 83035429



