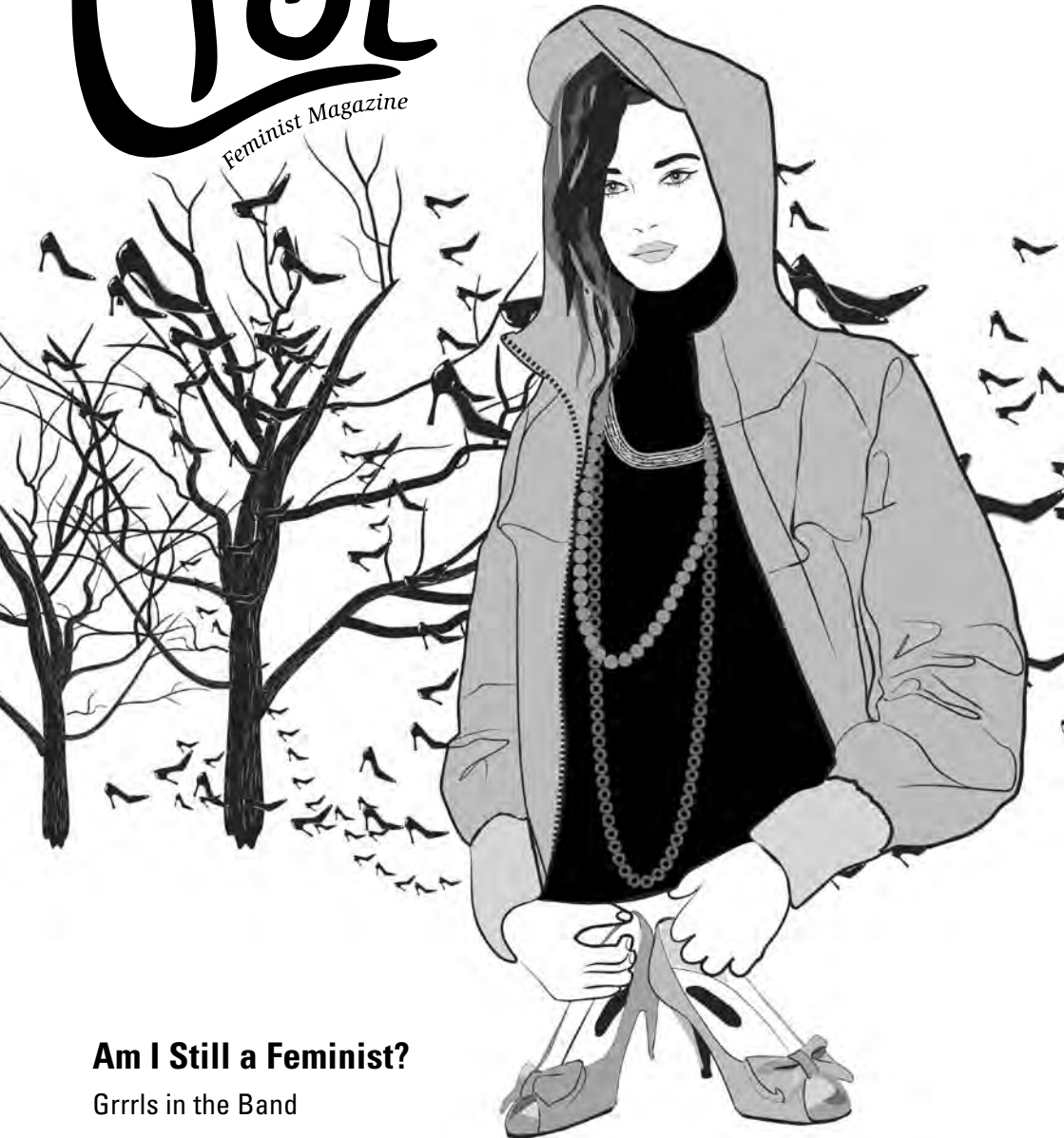


MUSE

Feminist Magazine

FREE

ISSUE 2
AUTUMN
04/06



Am I Still a Feminist?

Grrrls in the Band

Feminism and Sexual Violence

...and how to make lemon cordial



Request for contributions

Muse is really keen to receive writing, images, art, etc from any women to be included in future issues. For information on contributing please email muse@riseup.net and we will send you a copy of the Muse profile and contributors information sheet. **Deadline for issue three contributions is 1 May 2006.**

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We are a small group of young women, living in Wellington, who have come together to create this zine, which aims to provide a space for women's voices. We do not represent all women or all feminists.

We encourage any woman to submit content (writing /pictures/art) which we will print if it is compatible with our values.

We reserve the right to select content based on our values and on available space. Muse is produced by the Muse editorial collective which is Anya Nidd, L T Louie, Jenn Jones, Karen Price, Natalie Gousmett, Rachel Service and Tanya Newman.

Additional editing of this issue was completed by Natalie Gousmett and Karen Price.

Thank you

Muse wishes to thank all our contributors to this issue. Also special thanks to Lou Wallace for all her wonderful design and illustration and Liz Wilson for her illustrative work on the cover and in the 'Am I Still a Feminist?' and 'A Radical Feminist Analysis of Pornography' articles.

IN-BRIEFS

Compiled by Karen Price

Africa Elects First Woman Leader

Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf was sworn in as President of Liberia in January, making her the first democratically elected female Head of State in Africa. During her six-year presidential term, she will be faced with addressing the political chaos left by previous President Charles Taylor, currently in exile. In her inaugural address she addressed concerns specific to Liberian women, pledging to empower women in all aspects of life, and particularly to address crimes against women, to enforce recently established rape laws, encourage education of children and particularly girls, and provide economic programmes that enable women to assume their proper economic place. Johnson-Sirleaf has twice been a political prisoner, and has previously worked for the United Nations and the World Bank.

Anti-HIV Gel May Help Women

The Federal Drug Agency in the United States is fast-tracking approval of a new anti-HIV drug VivaGel, and if trials are successful, it could be available as early as 2008. This would be the first microbicide on the market. Infection rates amongst women around the world continue to be on the rise, particularly due to male partners refusing to wear condoms. Rates of infection in developing countries are disproportionately high among women. The potential to hide the use of a microbicide from one's partner would provide well-overdue protection for women from HIV/AIDS worldwide.

Threat to US Women's Rights

Recent appointments to the US Supreme Court pose grave threats to women's rights, particularly access to contraception and abortion. New members of the Supreme Court have tipped the balance towards the conservatives, placing affirmative action, sex and race anti-discrimination laws in jeopardy.

First Woman President of Chile

Michelle Bachelet was elected the first woman President of Chile in January. An agnostic and single mother, Bachelet campaigned on a leftist platform and spoke out for women's rights. During her presidency she plans to focus on improving public education, health services and labour laws. She also promises to lead a Cabinet consisting of 50% women.

Feminist Writer Dies

Betty Friedan, one of America's most famous feminist writers, died on February 4 this year. Best known for her book *The Feminine Mystique*, a best seller in the 1960s, Friedan's writing laid the groundwork for the feminist movement in the United States. Published in 1963, her book asserted that women were not necessarily fulfilled by their roles as housewives and mothers. In 1966 she co-founded the National Organisation for Women (NOW), which campaigned for equality. She campaigned for the right to abortion, equal pay and maternity leave, which were seen by many as radical ideas at the time.

Human Trafficking Increasing in Southeast Asia

The number of women entering Taiwan as brides and then entering prostitution has sharply increased in recent years. Most of the women came from Vietnam and Indonesia, and were supposed to become brides of local men. Investigations have revealed human trafficking syndicates at work.

Honour Killings Continue

Four young women were murdered in a brutal 'honour killing' in Pakistan. The father slit the throats of his step-daughter and three younger daughters, after his step-daughter was accused of adultery by her husband. The younger girls were reportedly murdered out of fear they would do what their elder sister had done. The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan states there was no evidence of an affair, and it is more likely that the young woman was abused by her husband and had decided to leave him. Although the father has been arrested and potentially faces punishment for the murders, the Human Rights Commission states that women are often treated as property and crimes against them go unpunished.

African Nations Sign Women's Rights Treaty

Fifteen African countries have ratified the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa, affirming that reproductive rights are human rights. The Protocol mandates women's right to abortion when pregnancy results from assault, rape or incest, and also when a woman's mental health, physical health or life is jeopardised. This is the first international treaty to assert this right. The adoption of the Protocol is a significant improvement on the African Charter, which has often been used to justify the subordination of women because of its' support for traditional cultural practices, such as female genital mutilation (FGM). The Protocol bans FGM, another first for an international document.

IN-BRIEFS

CONTINUED

First Global Study of Domestic Violence

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has released a global study of domestic violence, noting that women are much more likely to be subjected to violence at the hands of their partners than the hands of strangers. Trends of abuse and the effect on women's health were a major focus of the study. Findings of the research reveal the impact of partner violence has a similar impact on a woman's health and well-being, regardless of where she may live, the prevalence of violence in her setting, or her cultural or economic background. 20% of women interviewed had not previously revealed their abuse to anyone, and of those who had, most choose to confide in friends or family rather than seek help from authorities.

Indian Women Fight Back Against Rape

After years of silence surrounding rape and assault, and fear of personal blame, rape survivors in India are learning to fight back. Self defence classes and protective sprays are being taken up by women in an effort to protect themselves.

Pope Threatens Abortion and Same-Sex Union Rights

Tens of thousands of Italian women have taken to the streets demanding their Government retain liberal abortion laws, and demonstrations have also been held in support of same-sex unions. This follows Pope Benedict XVI's reiteration to Italian politicians of his opposition to the RU 486 (the abortion pill) and same-sex unions. This is despite recent research revealing 69% of Italian Catholics are in favour of legal status for same-sex couples.

UNICEF Report on Female Genital Mutilation

The United Nations Children's Fund has released a report providing current information on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), with suggestions for ending this violent practice. The report reveals about three million women and girls are subjected to FGM every year, and that it is practiced just as often today as it was ten years ago. The report emphasises the need to work with communities to change gender stereotypes that result in women's subservient position, which is then reinforced by FGM. FGM is a term used to refer to the harmful practice of cutting or removing all or parts of the female genitals for non-medical reasons. Depending on the environment and type of procedure used, FGM can cause sterility, birth complications, loss of sexual pleasure and disease.

Millions of Girls Globally Lack Primary Education

Of nearly 115 million children lacking primary education, 90 million are girls, according to a recent United Nations report. The report found that 46 countries, mostly in sub-Saharan Africa, will not meet this year's United Nations Millennium Development Goal of achieving gender parity in primary schools. Although factors such as natural disasters, war and poverty featured, the report highlighted how outdated gender roles, early marriage, HIV/AIDS and pregnancy all contributed to preventing girls' access to education. The report identifies that when educational opportunities are limited, male privilege and entitlement ensures boys' participation is prioritised. The report proposes new approaches to promoting girls' education worldwide, including removing financial barriers and creating financial incentives in sending children to school.

FEMINISM IS
THE RADICAL
NOTION THAT
WOMEN ARE
PEOPLE

The L Word

Pat Rosier

No, this is not a review of the television programme. It's about being a lesbian. Not queer or gay but lesbian. How old-fashioned, how twentieth-century is that?

I like to call myself a lesbian. Once I was a wife and I struggled with that even though then (in the nineteen sixties and seventies) I wasn't aware of an alternative other than spinster. I found feminism first then a (woman) friend propositioned me and the rest, as they say, is history.

Lesbian was a hard word to deal with at first. I was a primary school teacher at the time. Gradually though, as we achieved Homosexual Law Reform and I listened to Alix Dobkin singing "Leaping Lesbians" and other such songs and read the novels and theory pouring out of the lesbian and feminist presses, and we lesbians talked and argued and lived our lesbian lives, being lesbian became all right. Literally.

Now I'm 64. A couple of women on a lesbian-writers' email list I'm on refer to their female partners as their wife. (I suppose their partners

UN Peacekeepers Abuse Women

United Nations peacekeepers are continuing to rape and abuse women, according to a recent report by Refugees International. The report identifies the bulk of peacekeepers as men, a hyper-masculine culture encouraging sexual exploitation and abuse, and a tradition of silence. The report recommends increasing numbers of female troops and management, establishing independent watchdog agencies, mandatory gender issues training programmes, improving access to the UN complaints process, and conducting empowerment programmes for local women in post-combat zones.

refer to them in the same way but I've never asked). To me a wife is a person who has various roles expected of her, domestic and caring roles, and a male partner. The youngest man and woman I know well (in their early forties) who are married to each other don't use 'wife' and 'husband' in referring to each other, they use 'partner' or their names and a reference to being married to him or her.

I do not like lesbians using the language or having the aspiration of being 'like' a heterosexual married couple. I understand that people want their relationship recognised and validated but I favour retaining the difference of being lesbian. There's no other group like lesbians, that is, women who have their closest intimate relationships with women. And I know that there have been and are women in this group who prefer the label, if there must be one, 'gay women'. More recently we can be inclusively queer, along with people of various sexual orientations and genders, and a lot of women who are of a younger generation than me prefer this.

I prefer to be referred to as a lesbian. And if you really want to make my day, call me a lesbian feminist.

Am I Still A Feminist?

Kiran Chug

The question scared me, it made me feel off balance, it unsteadied the foundations that I had worked so hard to ground myself among. For months it had whispered itself into my ears, lurked around the dark crevices of my mind and tip-toed into my dreams. Now, as I caught a glimpse of myself in the mirror, make-up face, high heels on, lighting the candles on the dinner table, I couldn't quiet the scream: "What happened to you? You used to be a Feminist."

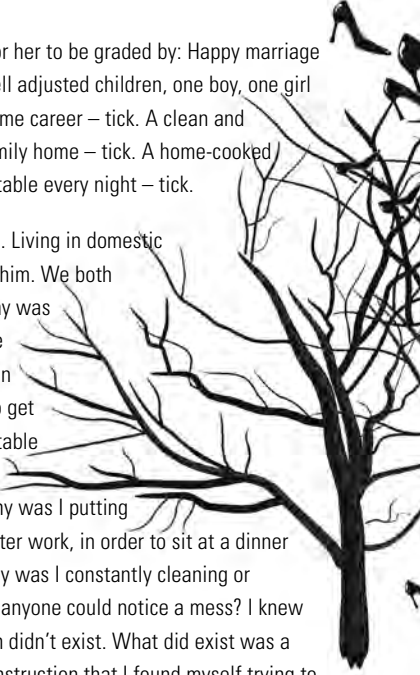
Was this me, beneath the lipstick and behind the haute-cuisine whipped up after work before he came home? I spent years scorning cosmetics. I despised anyone who required a girl to look like what the magazines had told him was beautiful. Equally, I had always worn whatever I wanted, refusing to follow the latest dictates of a patriarchal society thinking up ever-new ways to objectify women through the styles she believed she chose to wear. I had argued with my mother that she had been at work all day, just like my father had, and that she should not cook the dinner every night. I tried tirelessly to convince her that there simply does not exist a gene in women that means that they must cook every meal as their husbands are unable to. I begged her not to spend every Saturday morning cleaning, but to take a rest and share out the chores. I pleaded with her that we did not require a domestic goddess, a saint, a martyr. I wished deeply she could celebrate being a woman, without needing to demonstrate that she was capable of passing all the tests her generation

had devised for her to be graded by: Happy marriage – tick. Two well adjusted children, one boy, one girl – tick. A full time career – tick. A clean and welcoming family home – tick. A home-cooked dinner on the table every night – tick.

But here I was. Living in domestic harmony with him. We both worked, so why was I rushing home via the shops in urgent need to get dinner on the table before he got home? And why was I putting on make-up after work, in order to sit at a dinner table? And why was I constantly cleaning or tidying before anyone could notice a mess? I knew that perfection didn't exist. What did exist was a patriarchal construction that I found myself trying to live up to.

I had failed. I had given in. Slowly, gradually, without noticing, I had begun to epitomise a woman conditioned and created by patriarchy. Meanwhile, trampled on by stilettos, there was a feminist deep inside saying "think, think, think." And that is what I did. Long and hard. I blew out the candles, forgot to turn off the oven, told him to make it himself, and sat down to think.

What I realised was that now, as opposed to my teenage years, I was making choices. I used to wear my badge of feminism so unflinchingly that it had oppressed me. My very own belief system had forced me into a set of conditions by which to live my life: I will not date men because all penetrative sex is rape; I will never watch any Hollywood movies because they all attempt to condition us with the values of





patriarchy; I will never buy products I remember seeing advertised as the media objectifies women; I will never wear pink because gender is a social construct, etc.

Today, I still believe that the media objectifies women. I still believe that Hollywood is one of man's most powerful tools in supporting and strengthening an ideology which consistently represses women. I still believe that gender is a social construct, that patriarchy instills at every level of society an idea of what is feminine and what is masculine.

But today, I am brave enough in myself to make choices. Sometimes I want to cook the dinner, because I enjoy cooking, just as men do. Sometimes I have a tidy-the-house-attack, just as men do. Sometimes I dress up a

little – just as men do. I believe that making these choices, and having the strength to feel comfortable with them, does not contradict my feminist values.

I will always fight to eradicate oppression, at any level I can. I will always fight to abolish social constructs. I will always ensure that my children are brought up to question the malestream and to create their own herstory or history. And now I am strong enough to make choices from within, and recognise whether they are my choices – or have been imprinted upon my subconscious by patriarchal ideologies. To me, this shows growth. I am proud of my badge, and it no longer constricts or constrains me.

Yes. I am still a Feminist.

4

Natalie Gousmett

So you want some numbers do you?

1

2

3

Thanks to Karen Price for assistance compiling the stats.

Issue one of Muse was well received by most guys I know and I was interested in their comments as much as female readers' feedback. One of my male friends said something along the lines of "it was good but...there needs to be more facts on why feminism is needed or important". This is a common comment I get when someone finds out I am a feminist. It is the need to have some facts and figures, some proof, as if it is not already everywhere around us. It most often comes from guys (but not always) and I am not sure if that is because of a more sceptical nature and a need for more 'hard evidence', or if it is just that they don't live it, so how could they know it?

Often it really bugs me and I think (or say, depending on my mood) "what sort of proof do you want...four out of five women walking home at night feel scared for their safety, 80% of women have felt embarrassed and belittled by leering from a group of males, 75% of women have suffered body image related illness as a result of media portrayals of women, 3 out of 5 young women have mistaken being beautiful and sexual as the same as being a good person..."

This is how many women feel but they don't measure things like this! Why can't they

just trust us that it is shit to be a woman living in a man's world? I know, I get it, it is hard to really understand things from other people's perspectives. I do have to constantly challenge myself to consider how hideous it is to be non-white living in our racist white society, or to be lesbian living in a heterosexist world. So for those who need some assistance to see another perspective and those who need some facts to throw back in an argument, here are a few basic NZ stats:

Work

- Women have higher rates of participation than men in all categories of unpaid work, both within and outside the household (this includes household work, caring for children, caring for other dependents, voluntary and community work).
- Women are 3 times more likely than men to work part-time (36% compared to 12%). Part time work is commonly associated with less security and lower pay.
- Women hold only 5.04% of board directorships in companies listed on the New Zealand Stock Exchange (NZX).
- Women hold only 15.83% of senior academic positions (professors and associate professors) in New Zealand's eight Universities.
- Women hold only 14.12% of legal partnerships in New Zealand legal firms (with 10 or more partners).
- Women make up only 32% of New Zealand Members of Parliament, yet this is the most ever.

Income

- The gender pay gap has increased. Women now earn on average 82% of what men earn for the same work. This is a drop from 86% in 2004.
- Women's median hourly earnings were \$15.00 compared to men's median hourly earnings of \$17.50. This is a ratio of 85.7%, and has been falling since 2002.
- Apart from the gender pay gap there is also an ethnicity pay gap. For example, in 2003, on average, a pakeha male earned \$19.88 per hour, whereas Maori and Pasifika women earned, on average, \$14.53 and \$13.79 (per hour) respectively.

Education

- The average female bachelors graduate can take significantly longer to pay off her student loan compared to her male equivalent, due to factors such as the gender pay gap and time out of the paid workforce to raise children.
- Within one year of graduating, women with business and commerce degrees are earning \$11,000 less on average than their male classmates.
- Within one year of graduating, the average salary for female postgraduates is \$19,415 less than the average male postgraduate's salary.
- Women make up the majority of student parents. Cost of childcare can act as a significant barrier to access and retention of parents in tertiary study.

Crime

- 30% of females aged 15 years and over experienced some form of victimisation in 2000, with each of these females experiencing an average of 2.7 victimisations.
- In 2003, 13,729 women and 10,053 children were assisted by Women's Refuge.
- In 2001 females made up just over half of the population, yet they made up only 20% of all recorded apprehensions, 17% of convictions and 4% of those sentenced to a custodial sentence.

Health

- Maori females have a higher rate of death than non-Maori in all age groups.
- Females have higher rates of arthritis, osteoporosis, asthma and chronic obstructive respiratory conditions than males.
- Females have higher cancer registration rates than males between the ages of 20 and 50 years.
- A woman's ability to exercise freedom of choice over her sexual and reproductive health is still not guaranteed, due to the requirement of the approval of two separate medical practitioners in order to receive an abortion in New Zealand.

Parenting

- Sole parents are far more likely to be women (82%) than men (18%).

Though there have been many genuine and necessary gains for women in New Zealand, there are still significant inequities and barriers facing New Zealand women today. We still earn less than men. Women do most of society's unpaid work, at home and in the community. Women are much more likely to live in poverty or be the sole parents in the increasing number of sole parent families. Women are still predominantly the victims of rape and sexual abuse and domestic violence (see article in this issue "Why is Sexual Violence a Feminist Issue?" for more information on this).

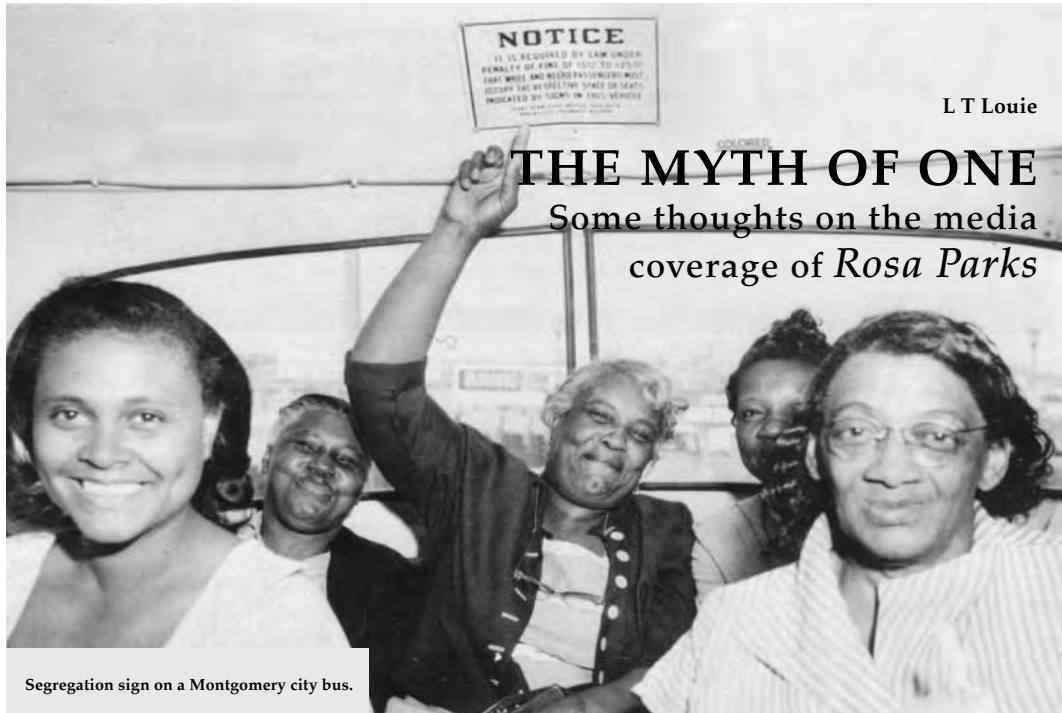
If you are one of those people who always asks for the proof of the need for feminism in numbers then I hope this helps, and I suggest that you also take the time to do some research yourself!

- 1 Statistics New Zealand – Focussing on Women 2005.
- 2 Human Rights Commission (2004) New Zealand Census of Women's Participation in Governance and Professional Life.
- 3 New Zealand University Students' Association calculations using the Iverson Model.
- 4 New Zealand Vice-Chancellors Committee (2001).
- 5 New Zealand Vice Chancellors Committee (2004), University Graduate Destinations.

L T Louie

THE MYTH OF ONE

Some thoughts on the media coverage of *Rosa Parks*



Segregation sign on a Montgomery city bus.

“Our mistreatment was just not right, and I was tired of it...I kept thinking about my mother and my grandparents, and how strong they were. I knew there was a possibility of being mistreated, but an opportunity was being given to me to do what I had asked of others.”

“Quiet Strength” by Rosa Parks
Zondervan Publishing House, 1994.

I learned about Rosa Parks in fifth form history class. In true imperialist fashion, we were taught very little about the race issues in New Zealand other than a token mention of ‘The Treaty’, but went into the black civil rights movement of the US in great depth. A bored class of adolescents were taught the names of famous players (mostly men) in someone else’s history: Martin Luther King, Stokely Carmichael, Rosa Parks etc.

After the death of Rosa Parks, znet published an article by Michael Albert about the media coverage of the famous

civil rights activist’s life. He put his finger on something that had also troubled me as I mourned a great activist and watched the 6pm news’ selective interpretation of her life. That is, Rosa Parks was a great and brave activist operating within a social group – she did not do it alone. Article after news broadcast heralded her as starting the civil rights movement on the fateful day she was arrested on a bus protesting racist laws, without ever mentioning the groups she worked with for a long time prior to that day, the swell of public activism that was taking place at the time and the hard work that went into publicising Rosa Parks’ arrest by other equally fantastic activist women.

Like others of my generation, the impact of being an 80’s child and a teenager through the new-right dark days of the 90’s was that my world-view was tainted by individualism. First I thought that things really could be achieved by ‘oneself’

and that an individual could and should make a big splash. (This was in opposition to the deeply ingrained kiwi tall-poppy syndrome.) Conversely, I felt that to become like Rosa Parks, or any other social activist I so admired, was impossible. Because evidently only a certain few could achieve such incredible results and if you weren't born under lucky stars then 'too bad buddy'. All around me I could see celebrities, superheroes and heroines. At school we were taught to compete, to study hard alone to achieve personal success. The capitalist system teaches us to work independently for money and to strive to be better than our neighbours (read: better = wealthier). The Right purport that competition is everything, that the individual should be 'free' to pursue and gain capital, and that every person is her or his own god in effect. Even my local church spoke of One – the one god almighty, the one we individually should aspire to be like, and our entry to the heaven was secured by our individual behaviour.

The idea that one has to possess a gifted heroic element to achieve big things is a myth that inhibits social movements and activism. Because so many people already feel that they can't make a difference in their family situation, in their worksite, or in society at large; that they aren't the mythological hero/ine material of Kate Sheppard or Che godly Guevara. We are immobilized by the myth of one. All subjugated groups in society need figures of inspiration, and as a feminist I am relieved when I see great women finally being recognised. But more than that I believe that collectivism is a feminist value, and that the culture of 'hero/ine' can have an inhibiting, if not misleading aspect to it.

The challenge which we should have been taught at school is how to tackle the task

we face to organise together and work with other people to achieve a result that benefits us all. Within this, it is not dangerous to have figureheads and role models, as long as these are humanised (and preferably womanised) for us and we are told the whole story about the pain, patience and people who are behind the scenes of all great change. For instance, that Rosa Parks and others in her community had been active secretly in civil rights groups for years while listening to lynch mobs terrorise blacks at night, and her civil disobedience on a bus was not at all a spur of the moment response to having tired feet.

The story told to us by the mainstream media at the death of Rosa Parks did not do justice to her, her work and to the movement to which she belonged. Her story was de-clawed, as though a movie star had just died, by removing her from the grass-roots movement. It was not conveyed that somebody, a 'nobody' like you and I became involved in something great, as we too can all do if we organise. The media often presents us with the short and pretty version of the story, which I think Rosa Parks would have been upset about. Rosa Parks' life is truly inspiring and her legacy will be the ongoing activism in a new generation – a much greater legacy than a person in a history book who once did one great thing. I am increasingly aware that the great women of herstory were a part of a group, that without each other or organising they would not have been heard, and that the idea of a sole heroine of social and revolutionary movements is just a myth of one, that we must resist in the name of future social change.

Photograph: John Rosanowski, Pam O'Connell, Tony Murdoch. Black Civil Rights in the USA (2nd ed). Pearson Education. New Zealand. 2001.

Ruth Polaczuk

A Radical Feminist Analysis of Pornography

Pornography, smut, and erotica are all names which describe what radical feminists perceive to be "...material which endorses sexual behaviour that is degrading and/or abusive to women..."¹ Radical feminists have isolated two attributes of pornography which they deem renders its content as harmful to all women. The first of the two offending entailments is that pornography encourages acts of violence towards women through its depiction of male dominance. The second accusation made by radical feminists is that because the pornographic materials are made primarily for a male audience, the resulting portrayal of female sexuality is a lie. These two stipulations form an equation about pornography of which the product is potential harm for every woman in society, or in the words of feminist Andrea Dworkin, the product is an "...open grave where so many women lie waiting to die."² These objectionable attributes of pornography have far reaching implications for women. Such implications have led radical feminists to the conclusion that "the pornographers may well destroy us."³

The radical feminist claim that pornography harms not merely one woman but the entirety of the female sex has been critiqued from various angles. One critique comes in the form of "...the catharsis argument – whereby pornography is said to cut down on would – be

criminals with substitute satisfactions."⁴ A second critique of the radical feminist argument against pornography questions whether such materials, if harmful at all, are intrinsically more harmful to women than they are to men. Ann Garry who writes about the immorality of pornography in her article, *Pornography And Respect For Women*, rebukes both of these critiques with what she exposes as women's unique relationship with harm.

She notes that, "because in our culture we connect sex with harm that men do to women, and because we think of the female role in sex as that of harmed object is automatically

to treat her as less than fully human. "The important quotes to expand on in this statement are, "...harm that men do to women..." and "...treat her as less than fully human..."⁵ The two statements imply that sex is something which is done to a female, furthermore, that sex is a violent act done to a female which in its consequence dehumanises her. Evidence for such an analysis of sex are echoed throughout society's linguistic formations. Slang words for sexual intercourse like screwing and banging entail elements of harm being done unto the female. Other slang words such as those used in reference to the female genitalia like "pussy" and "beaver" show the extent to which females are dehumanised in regards to their sexuality, where men are not. Language and pornography give the power of the sex act to men and dedicate a position of a subordinate receiver to the female. Radical feminists claim that pornography harms women where it cannot harm men because of this unique affiliation between the female and violence.

Feminist Robin Morgan isolated pornography as a theory. The practice it identifies with is rape.⁶ She initially isolated this observation and it has since served as the fundamental reason why radical feminists oppose pornography; pornography encourages violence towards women. Andrea Dworkin documented many

cases which prove the relationship between pornography and violence against women. When a film played in New York, apparently depicting the rape and murder of a woman, Andrea Dworkin observed that, "During the time that Snuff showed in New York City, the bodies of several women, hacked to pieces, were found in the East River..."⁷ With evidence such as this and authority from some psychologists who call pornography "recipe books", the radical feminist argument against pornography has been validated because the claim that, "... pornography itself exemplifies and recommends behaviour that violates the moral principle to respect persons"⁸, is observed in the monkey see, monkey do disposition of a proportion of the pornography viewing population.

A further argument made by radical feminists is that, "Pornography lies explicitly about women's sexuality, and through such lies fosters more lies about our humanity, our dignity, and our personhood."⁹ This second argument asserts that, in pornographic materials, the only justification of the violation of the female character is her sex. To clarify; women are harmed in pornography because of their sex, this lie, that being female equals being violated does not finish at the end of the movie, the ideology that a woman is solely her sex is entrenched in culture.¹⁰ The conclusion of this argument is that because women are regarded as one in the same as their sex they are denied full human rights.

To summarise this analysis, the fundamental basis of the anti pornography stance taken by radical feminists is that by encouraging sexual violence against women and lying about her sexuality, namely through judging her as one in the same as her sex, pornographic materials harm each and every woman. The catharsis critique and opposition that pornography is liable to harm men to the same degree as it harms women is rebuked by the radical feminist arguments which isolate a unique relationship between women and violence. Through language, women are given a harmed status in the act of sex when they are banged and screwed, pornography harms women further by binding →



Continued from previous page

them so they can be, "stuffed and mounted..." (Actual Penthouse jargon.) The radical feminist argument establishes a connection between the consumption of pornographic materials and the committing of sexual violence. I discussed a second dimension to the radical feminist argument against pornography which asserted that because women are violated solely on the grounds of their sex in pornography, women as a whole are denied full human rights. In order for a change in legal status radical feminists may have to prove that the abolition of pornography is more important than the pornographers right to free speech. Helen E. Longino notes that the anti-pornography movement established by radical feminists, "...is an essential component of women's struggle for legal, economic, and social equality, one which requires the support of all feminists."¹¹

And such a struggle will require the support of all feminists, because when Hugh Hefner makes statements like, "These chicks are our natural enemy."¹² The reply from radical feminists must be, "We will not give in."¹³

- 1 Longino E. Helen, 'Pornography, oppression, and freedom: A closer look' in *Take back the night: Women on pornography* (Morrow: New York, 1980) 2
- 2 MacKinnon, Catherine, 'Francis Biddles' sister: Pornography, civil rights, and speech' in *Feminism unmodified* (Harvard university press: 1987) 196
- 3 Dworkin, Andrea, 'Letter from a war zone' in *Feminist frameworks 2nd edition* (McGraw Hill: New York, 1978) 481
- 4 Simons, G. L, *Pornography Without Prejudice* (Blackie&Son, 1972) 199
- 5 Garry, Ann, 'Pornography and respect for women' in *Is pornography immoral?* (Guilford: Dushkin publishing ,1992) 191
- 6 Dworkin, Andrea, 'Letter from a war zone' in *Feminist frameworks 2nd edition* (McGraw Hill: New York, 1978) 473
- 7 Ibid 474
- 8 Garry, Ann, 'Pornography and respect for women' in *Is pornography immoral?* (Guilford: Dushkin publishing ,1992) 191
- 9 Longino E. Helen, 'Pornography, oppression, and freedom : A closer look' in *Take back the night: Women on pornography* (Morrow: New York, 1980) 3
- 10 Ibid
- 11 Longino E. Helen, 'Pornography, oppression, and freedom: A closer look' in *Take back the night: Women on pornography* (Morrow: New York, 1980) 5
- 12 Dworkin, Andrea, 'Letter from a war zone' in *Feminist frameworks 2nd edition* (McGraw Hill: New York, 1978) 473
- 13 Ibid, 481



Keep fresh and clean: Bathe daily, wash your hair as soon as it gets oily. And don't forget your fingernails.



For acne: Scrub your face with a turkish wash cloth and HOT soap suds several times a day. Rinse with cold water.



Make-up: So gently . . . a little powder and touch of lipstick is lots more attractive than that "painted" look.



Eat right: You'll be the first to regret too many sweets. Concentrate on fresh vegetables, fruit, milk, cereals, eggs, fish.

Tips to help you look and feel your best every day

Remember, how you take care of yourself all through the month makes a big difference in how you look and feel while you're menstruating, too. So here are a few tips to keep you looking bright and shining every day of the month.



Stand erect: You'll feel better because your "insides" are getting the right support. You'll look better, too, because your clothes will fit properly.



Keep regular: Keep your system in order . . . drinking plenty of water helps. Makes a big difference in your pep . . . also helps prevent cramps.



Exercise: The kinds that strengthen your tummy muscles are particularly good. Do them every morning . . . good muscle tone helps on menstruation days.



Get lots of sleep: Forty winks now and then won't keep you bright-eyed day after day. Try to average 8 full hours of sleep every night.

Why is Sexual Violence a Feminist Issue?

Tanya Newman and Georgina Thompson

(Both Tanya and Georgina work at Wellington Rape Crisis)

Rape and sexual abuse are crimes that are overwhelmingly perpetrated by men against women. Therefore, sexual violence is a feminist issue.

Sexual violence is prevalent in our community; yet little is being done to recognise, address, or prevent it. We believe this is due to the victims primarily being women, that it is seen as too hard, that it is often perpetrated by people known to the victim, and because addressing the issue is seen as women's responsibility rather than a community responsibility. The public response to sexual violence is often to encourage women to be safer. As a community, we never respond to sexual violence by asking "why do men rape?" or "how we can stop them?"

Sexual violence affects men and women differently. Men are not controlled due to the threat of sexual violence in the way that women are. All women are affected by sexual violence whether they have experienced rape and sexual abuse or not. The existence of rape and sexual abuse shapes and controls all of our lives. We learn from a very young age to fear, not to trust others, to be wary of strangers, and to behave 'safely'. Girls and women are told that if we take precautions we can keep ourselves safe and avoid sexual violence. Such precautions include: not wearing provocative clothing (whatever that

is!); choosing our friends and partners carefully; not going out alone after dark; not drinking; not flirting; etc. However, sexual violence is an opportunistic crime that can happen to any woman at any time, whether she behaves 'safely' or not. Despite this, women make decisions every day in the hope of keeping themselves safe. Such decisions often place limits and restrictions on our lives, and serve to create a society in which women experience a cultural curfew. These decisions have become a way of life so we forget to acknowledge them as unfair, controlling, and an utter breach of our freedom and human rights.

'Safety rules' set women up to fail as, even if women follow all the safety rules, they can still be raped. The rules allow women to be blamed when they experience sexual violence and they can lead to questions such as: "Why were you there?" "Why didn't you fight back?" "Why did you accept that drink?" etc. Many of the ideas about 'safe' behaviour are based on myths about rape and sexual abuse. Examples of such myths include: "all women really want to be raped"; "women ask for it"; "sexual violence is about men's need for sex"; and "once men start they can't stop". Many people believe that rapists are dodgy looking strangers who hang out in dark alleys. However, the fact is that most survivors of sexual violence were abused by someone they know – by a family member, intimate partner, sports coach, colleague, etc. Statistically, it is far more dangerous to go home than it is to go out alone at night! →

BREAK THE
SILENCE
AGAINST
SEXUAL
VIOLENCE!

As sexual violence is often perpetrated by people known to their victim, it has been regarded as a private matter. This is particularly the case when rape occurs within intimate partner relationships. Law and culture have supported men's rights to have control in the home without interference. Rape in marriage only became illegal in New Zealand in 1985! Though the law has changed, the social expectation that women should be available for sex still exists, as does the belief that women owe sex to male partners.

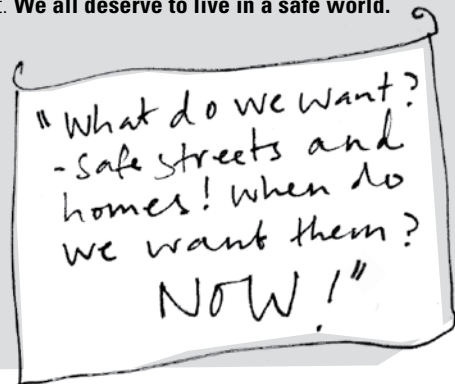
Rape and sexual abuse are (generally) accepted as bad things that happen in the world. It is treated as something that we need to accept and take precautions to avoid. There isn't an expectation that we should be able to live free from sexual violence. In 2006, it is abhorrent that sexual violence still exists! As a community we do not ask who rapes and sexually abuses or how we can stop sexual violence. This lack of questioning allows us to accept sexual violence as something that happens rather than something we can come to understand, be outraged about, and stop. Rape and sexual abuse must be eradicated. Unless we acknowledge the reality of the situation, that this is a crime perpetrated by men against women, then we lose our ability to understand how and why it happens and therefore our ability to end it.

Acknowledging that rape and sexual abuse are gendered crimes, or talking about sexual violence as a feminist issue, is increasingly unaccepted. A shift away from gendered analysis, to approaching sexual violence as a gender neutral issue, is occurring. This is part of the general backlash against feminism, which is informed by the belief that feminism has gone too far and tipped the balance of equality so that it is now men who are disadvantaged. Many people consider feminism to be an outdated idea whose time has passed. This argument supports society's general shift towards gender neutrality and reinforces the presumption that sexual violence is something

that is committed by people against people. There isn't the same kind of feminist movement that existed in the 1970's. Therefore, the backlash isn't being responded to adequately. There is insufficient public challenging of sexist advertising, pornography, and other forms of sexism. This helps support a culture where degradation and the sexual objectification of women is considered acceptable, which in turn supports male violence against women.

In order to end sexual violence the feminist movement must be regenerated and sustained. The gendered nature of rape and sexual abuse must be acknowledged – if we do not recognise the issue we cannot stop it. Sexual violence is a symptom of patriarchy – therefore patriarchy must be confronted in order to eradicate rape and sexual abuse. We need a feminist groundswell in order to challenge this pervasive and harmful social issue. We need to actively oppose the oppression of women in all areas of society in order to create a climate where rape and sexual abuse can no longer occur.

We must stop blaming women for being raped or sexually abused and stop putting the responsibility for safety on women alone. We must start asking, "Why do men rape and sexually abuse women?", "How can we as a community stop this from continuing?", and "How can we ensure women and children's safety?" We must say NO to sexual violence, recognise it as the crime that it is, and acknowledge our responsibility as a community to stop it. **We all deserve to live in a safe world.**



"What do we want?
- safe streets and
homes! When do
we want them?
NOW!"



SEXUAL VIOLENCE IS A FEMINIST ISSUE – SOME STATS

“One in three women around the world is likely to suffer physical, sexual or other abuse in her lifetime, usually at the hands of a family member or someone she knows. Half of the sexual assaults in the world are on girls of 15 or younger.”

Boseley, S. (2005). *Guardian Weekly*, October 28 – November 3. p. 33

“The NZ Youth 2000 study found that 22.2% of girls and 11.3% of boys reported an experience of unwanted sexual behaviour.”

McGregor, K. (2004). *Women talk about childhood sexual abuse. Women’s Health Update*. Volume 8 No 2, October 2004, p. 1-2

“In 48 population-based surveys around the world, between 10 and 90 per cent of women reported being physically assaulted by an intimate partner at some point in their lives. In some countries, one in four women report sexual violence by an intimate partner.”

Van der Gaag, N. (2004). *The No-Nonsense guide to Women’s Rights*. United Kingdom: New Internationalist Publications Ltd, p.101

“Sexual, physical and psychological violence causes as much of a burden of ill health and death among women aged 15 to 44 as cancer – and more than malaria and traffic accidents combined.”

Van der Gaag, N. (2004). *The No-Nonsense guide to Women’s Rights*. United Kingdom: New Internationalist Publications Ltd, p.101

Those Pesky Kids

An L T Louie **BOOK REVIEW** of Lynne

Truss's **'Talk to the Hand – The utter bloody rudeness of everyday life.'**

Profile Books 2005

Because I'm a geek people give me books for Xmas. I've read Naomi Klein's 'No War' and am starting to make a dent in Robert Fisk's 'War for Civilisation'. I also got a book called 'Talk to the Hand' by Lynne Truss for a fun holiday read. It turns out that Truss's book has actually got me **pissed off**.

'Talk to the Hand' is meant as a light read on etiquette, a bit of a moan about modern living and the incredible rudeness around us.

Now I too complain about rudeness, but the fact is I prefer to drive in Auckland than in Welly where people are so freaking polite and timid that you never know if they're changing lanes or just stoned and left the indicator ticking. I don't begrudge strangers for rushing, being short, not meeting my eye or refraining from stupid chitchat because we're all busy people, sharing a small place with our lives to be lived. Truss begrudges a lot of strange things, many of which are just to do with being young. So either I'm the wrong generation for the "Talk to the Hand" book, the wrong culture, or it's just not funny. Or all of the above.

This book just got me refuting all her complaints. It turns the reader into a complainer too. Here goes my spiel...One of Truss's strange peeves is people making phone conversations in public. Well, doesn't the word 'mobile' infer you don't have to be standing in your bedroom to conduct a conversation? Part of being a city dweller is that we conduct a lot of our work and social obligations out in public, but ideas of a mobile etiquette vary.

One of my younger sisters believes it's rude if a text conversation is abandoned by the other side. Now her friend could have run out of credit, be on another call or just attending to living, but she thinks you should always be polite and sign off. I think it's a waste of 20cents and just dumb to have to send a 'k, c u l8r' txt. I also don't think it's polite to send on those 'send to 10 people or you will have bad luck' messages cos' frankly I respect my friends more than that. My 13 year old sister would see it as an insult if such a txt wasn't responded to.

In this book there are plenty of those predictable digs about punctuation and spelling which you would have heard before. When will people accept that language is a fluid tool which is constantly, necessarily and naturally in flux? If our generation figured out how to make English more concise and user-friendly then good for us. It doesn't, as the book suggests, mean the decline of civility or the end of the polite world. There's also a strange complaint about a 15 year old girl in the US who started a demonstration when her school tried to ban the opposite sexes from touching one another. Surely such a natural-born organiser should be celebrated and any opposition to Christian conservatism in the States should be applauded. Truss thinks this sort of thing is outrageous, because obviously kids are just being rude if they organise to be treated as human beings. This book should have just been called "The utter bloody rudeness of young people- those pesky kids".

My favourite anti-youth complaint involves those 'rude' skateboarders on the sidewalk. Riding on the road is a much better way of hurting yourself. Oh my god Truss, please don't jump out of the way! We skaters are quite good at getting around pedestrians. The only fools who get ankle-tapped are the ones who decide to jump in the way at the last second. Believe it or not you don't have to panic just because you hear wheels on concrete going at half the speed of the car on your other side. Sheesh some people! In a skaters etiquette guide, sudden-side-steppers are the rudest of all.

Now the good thing about this book is that it made me look at my values and I've been asking other people what they find most rude. And surprise surprise, generation and culture play a part in the personal peeves. Other people's opinions seem more interesting than Truss's book, I gotta say. To cut a longish review short – this is the type of book a stuffy older anglo relly might enjoy.

Here are some of my top peeves of the moment btw:

- > People who don't let you finish what you are saying
- > Not indicating when driving, or driving too close or too slow
- > When you are introduced to a man and he shakes your male friend's hand but not yours.
- > Strangers who stare and stare and stare like you're a zoo animal.
- > Books like this that like to use us pesky kids as their scapegoats.

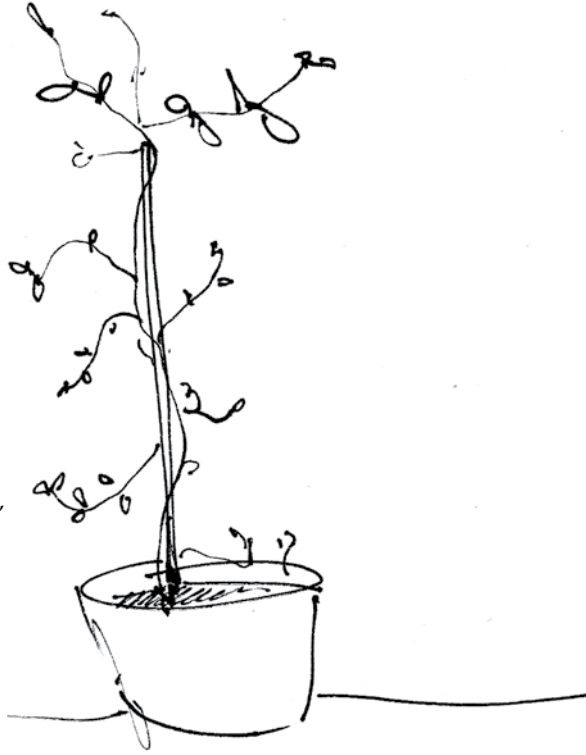
WSA Conference 2005 – Regenerating Feminisms

Natalie Gousmett

In November 2005 the Women's Studies Association held its biannual conference at Auckland University. The programme appealed to me because of its wide range of speakers, a large amount of time dedicated to workshops and the inclusion of presentations from community organisations. Two of the other Muses and I headed up together with some other young Wellington feminists. The theme was "Regenerating Feminisms" and although I didn't really feel like my feminism needed regenerating, the weekend proved to do just that.

When Sandra Coney spoke of her public vilification for speaking out against the use of the term "picking up birds" in an Auckland advertisement for transportation, I think it reminded me and other attendees of the anti-feminist environment we now live in. Yes, there have been huge improvements for women in New Zealand but it is a harder time to take a stand on women's issues. My initial thoughts are that this is because there isn't a strong feminist collectiveness. Also for some ridiculous reason 'PC' is seen as a bad thing, which results in the attack and misrepresentation of anything anyone says about respecting other people and protecting human rights. To protect ourselves from this we are forced to work in isolation or under the radar.

The same thoughts hit me when I listened to two Wellington Rape Crisis workers talk about the isolation in their work and the lack of support available for work that is feminist. They described the growing pressure to be gender neutral in order to get funding for their work. It struck me as disgusting that in this country in 2006 there is still so little support and resources for the people doing vital work for the huge numbers of women who have survived rape or sexual abuse and for the rest of us who have (inevitably) been affected by it in some way. Farida Sultana brought tears



to my eyes when she spoke of the complete oppression of so many women in many Asian countries and the horrific crimes against women that are being committed and covered up in migrant communities in New Zealand.

These examples alone (and there are many more) reinforced for me that there is still a need for feminism and that urgent action is vital. In that way my feminism has indeed been regenerated but not in the way that I magically have more energy. There is no magic answer for that. I did feel inspired by the opportunity to reconnect with women and especially young women who are doing amazing work and I think that we are all working in too much isolation. What is important is making connections so we can support each other and work as a group to put and keep women's issues on the agenda.

Baby Story

I want you to go on the pill he said so that I don't have to worry he said so that I don't have to wear condoms he said. So I went to the doctor who said how many partners have you had the pill won't protect you from sexually transmitted infections or diseases he said there are contraindications and there is reduced cycle control as with all COCs he said start it on the first day of your menstrual cycle he said. He meant period.

But then when I got sick in the mornings I already knew why and I went back to the doctor I don't know why and he said I didn't use it properly, and hadn't referred to section 7.1 on management of missed tablets but that anyway these were my options. So I went home but he had gone and the wardrobe was empty and I couldn't find his shoes or his toothbrush either so he must have gone. Maybe he was scared but I wasn't scared I wasn't scared was I.

When I was feeling heavy and could feel kicking everything felt right and good and I went back to the doctor I don't know why who said you should have come earlier and you should have been having regular check-ups and ultra sounds but I know that everything is fine I thought and I know that my baby is inside me and healthy so why do you need to do those things when you can't feel baby inside and already know that everything is fine I thought. But anyway these are the options he said but he didn't speak like normal people he used words which had been spun around and around in the wind and the wash and when they came out they sounded like the talking at the bottom of

the swimming pool at the lido when I put my head under when I was small. You need to see this doctor he said and so I went and he looked like the other one but outside his window were the dark green leaves dancing distractions and the birds diving into the sky singing follow us look at us. And then there were no more windows and just machines that were polished every Saturday and wires that touched my body my body but where were they going and what was traveling inside because I know they aren't hollow but what is inside the wires running away from my body or sprinting into my body from wherever all the wires come from. What are they I asked and he told me the Names but I didn't know how to make sense of his sounds no-one ever taught me.

So I called her because she is my mother and so she knows because she is my mother and she did this before and she knows because she is mother. And she touched my body and my baby knew and she sang the sounds that my body knew and listened to and her songs told me that I already knew and I did. And she was there when the water came rushing rushing to the ocean which was really in the garden after all because that is where the stream is. And she was there when I wasn't really or maybe she came to the other place with me but all I could feel there was my baby because there were no wires in the way trying to talk to us. And she helped me and helped me not be scared and I could feel my blood and my skin and every part of me and my baby.

we talk about sex
because we have always needed to
and only just learnt how

because (I'll spell it out)
of rape
and incest and the myth
of the vaginal orgasm
(you've heard this before?)

because of clitorodectomies
(but not here? not any more!)
and the difference
between 'adultery' and 'men's needs'

(for Lenka, for your sanity)

YES WE TALK ABOUT SEX

because of loveless marriages
and lustless conquests
which still entail:
babies
or birth control

or miscarriages
or abortion
and infection and isolation and depression

we talk about sex to feel sane
to keep your hands off us
or on us
to work out what we want
after years of being told

we talk about sex
(sorry to bring it up)
and they always ask after the rapist

Pip Wilde

10 WISE WAYS FOR WOMEN'S WELLNESS.

By Anya Nidd ND ~ Naturopath & Medical Herbalist

Prevention is always the best option with your health. The following 10 steps are aimed at specifically preventing female hormonal imbalances, and are easy to apply in your daily living.

If you already suffer from cyclical hormonal problems, this is even more reason to adopt these practices, so that your diet and lifestyle are no longer contributing factors. You will find that these are simple ways to improve your overall health as well as avoiding common female hormonal complaints such as PMS, heavy or painful periods, cyclical breast pain and skin problems.

1. ENSURE THAT YOUR DIET IS HIGH IN COMPLEX CARBOHYDRATES. Whole grains, legumes and potatoes with their skins on are rich in essential minerals and contain dietary fibre which aids in the elimination of excess hormones. Other non-starchy vegetables provide vital nutrients and should form 40% of your total food intake. Eat some cooked, some raw and use organics wherever possible to reduce pesticide exposure.

2. AVOID REFINED CARBOHYDRATES. (Sugar, white rice, white flour and processed foods). These foods have had the bulk of their nutrients destroyed during processing. They rapidly convert to sugar in the body which contributes to hypoglycaemia, and any excess (that which is not burnt off with exercise) will turn to fat. Excess sugar intake promotes inflammation, reduces the immune response and can lead to insulin resistance.¹ Eating unprocessed, low GI² whole-foods and fresh fruit will give a slower release of natural sugars and increase your nutrient intake.

3. AVOID SATURATED ANIMAL FAT AND HYDROGENATED OILS. As well as contributing to obesity and heart disease, these fats encourage the growth of intestinal bacteria which indirectly promote oestrogen

production. A high fat intake has been linked with excess oestrogen conditions such as benign breast disease, breast cancer, heavy periods, endometriosis and fibroids. Hydrogenated oils are found in margarine and commercial baked goods. These are the worst type of fats, containing chemicals which contribute to heart disease and cancer. Instead, use extra virgin olive oil for cooking at moderate temperatures and avocado or tahini as spreads. Limit dairy products other than low-fat organic yoghurt.

4. INCREASE YOUR ESSENTIAL FATTY ACID (EFA) INTAKE. These are the good fats, known as Omega-3 and Omega-6 fatty acids which are found in oily, deep sea fish, flax seeds, pumpkin seeds, hemp oil and evening primrose. EFA's have natural anti-inflammatory effects in the body which can dramatically reduce period pain. They can also improve blood circulation, nervous system health and skin condition. Evening primrose is a well known remedy for PMS and breast tenderness.



5. MAINTAIN A HEALTHY BODY WEIGHT. A very low body weight will lower oestrogen levels to the point where periods may stop and bone density is reduced, increasing the risk of osteoporosis later in life. On the other hand, obesity, especially if concentrated centrally in the body, can lead to insulin resistance.

6. AVOID ENVIRONMENTAL HORMONE DISRUPTORS. These include xeno-oestrogens; synthetic chemicals with oestrogen-like effects in the body. They are found in pesticides, soft plastics like glad wrap



and drink bottles, and polystyrene (take-away cups). These chemicals are released rapidly with heat (e.g. microwaving in plastic containers) and accumulate in fatty tissue. Synthetic oestrogens have been connected with oestrogen dependent cancers and fibroids.

Parabens, the cheap preservatives used in most cosmetics and deodorants, have been implicated in abnormal DNA replication and concentrations have been found in breast cancer tissue. Reading product labels will open your eyes to the chemicals we are exposed to on a daily basis.

Choosing to eat organically farmed meat, fish, and poultry (including eggs) will reduce your exposure to the synthetic hormones which are conventionally used to encourage animal growth and milk production.

7. INCREASE PHYTO-OESTROGENS.

These are the naturally occurring steroidal compounds in certain plants. They have a gentle regulating effect on female hormones. The best food sources include soy (I recommend fermented forms- miso, tamari and tempeh), flaxseed, fennel, licorice root, parsley and alfalfa.

8. EAT YOUR GREENS. Especially those from the cabbage family (broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, kale and brussel sprouts). These vegies improve liver function and the clearance of excess hormones from the body.

9. LIMIT ALCOHOL, CAFFEINE AND OTHER DRUGS. These substances leech nutrients from the body and put extra stress on the liver, nervous system and adrenal glands. This will increase your tendency to hormonal imbalances as the liver is less able to effectively eliminate toxins and hormones. Excess consumption may also leave you more prone to depression, anxiety, stress and fatigue. Aim for no more than one alcoholic drink/coffee per day and have a day off every week.

10. EXERCISE DAILY. Women who exercise regularly tend to have lighter and less frequent periods. Exercise improves pelvic circulation which reduces period pain and the risk of endometriosis. Yoga is particularly good for

reproductive disorders. Avoid aerobic exercise during menstruation – walking, swimming and yoga (without inversions) are better.

Trickey, Ruth; Women, Hormones and the Menstrual Cycle. Allen & Unwin, Australia 1998.

Mediherb Inclinic seminar notes; Endometriosis, PCOS, Uterine Fibroids/Menorrhagia. Francesca Naish/ Angela Hywood. Australia 2005.

www.healthyeatingclub.org/info/articles/diseases/glycaemic-table.htm

www.rmhiherbal.org/review/2000-4.html#mar

www.organicconsumers.org/bodycare/breastcancer090604.cfm

1 Insulin Resistance is a condition where tissues stop responding to insulin so the body is unable to utilise sugar properly. It is often involved with polycystic ovaries and other health problems such as high blood pressure and diabetes.

2 The Glycaemic Index (GI) is a rating of foods based on their overall effect on blood glucose levels. Foods which are rapidly converted to sugar in the body have a high GI rating, whereas those with slow conversion have a low GI.



Please email your women's health concerns to muse@riseup.net. Future issues will contain naturopathic advice for specific complaints.

Letters

We would love to hear from you – tell us your thoughts on issue two. Letters can be sent to muse@riseup.net and P O Box 11731, Manners St, Wellington.

Kia ora,

Found the first issue of Muse absolutely refreshing. As a seventh former (Year 13) at Wellington High, I've progressively become more and more frustrated with the lack of alternative media to counter the brainless crap that comes out of the mainstream.

Before knowing anything about Muse I had a argument with a friend about the 'F words' and I found it very amusing and great to see the article, which backed up my point. His point however was that feminism and feminists should re-brand to 'Gender Equality' to gain a broader market. I also found the Women's health, particularly the life without Tampons very intriguing. As a guy, we never learnt about the effects and pain that is the menstrual cycle in sex ed and puberty.

After reading the article today I decided to do further research online and tried to understand a little more. (That may be patronising – but it's not meant to be.) And found myself asking why? Why is menstruation disgusting? Why is it that I know so little about what affects 50% of the population? I guess, but am yet to form a more substantial point in my head that patriarchy is the perpetrator.

I wrote an opinion piece with ambition of having it put in our school magazine, The Flannel – unfortunately I fear that it will not be published. Not because it's too radical, Wellington High I would hope is a radical, open school. However I thought that I might attach it to this email. Could you give me some feed back, and if you like it I have no problem with it being published. On the off chance that you have a policy against attachments it's also below this email.

Regards,

Sonny Thomas

I'd like to congratulate you on a most interesting first issue. I think it's wonderful that you have decided to create a feminist magazine. I was involved now and then with Broadsheet, and grieved when it stopped publication.

I will post a cheque tomorrow as a donation. Please let me know how I can subscribe to Muse.

Very best wishes

Susan Grimsdell

(Please note: all letters here have been replied to directly but to clarify for readers – Muse accepts letters from men and women which we may print depending on space. However, as this is a feminist zine aiming to provide a space for young women's voices, we only publish content from women.

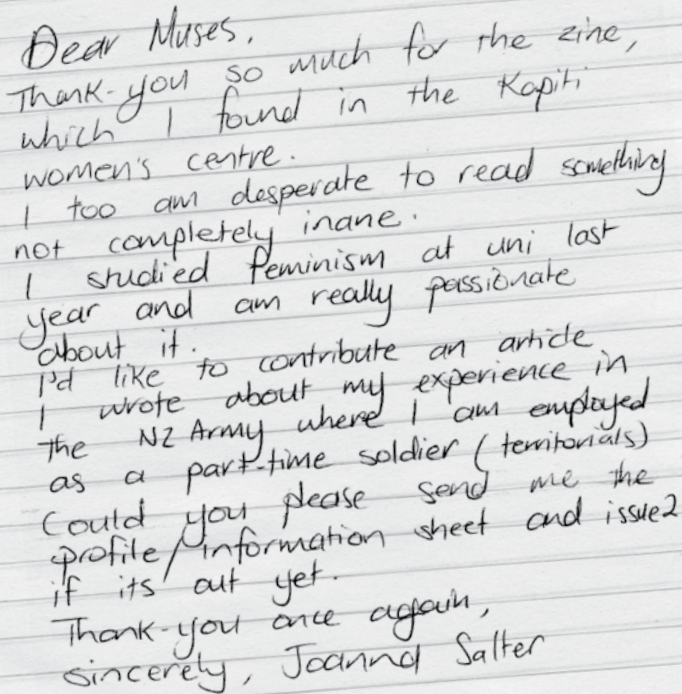
Hello fellow feminists, I love your magazine, great work!

I was especially glad to see articles on 'Alternative Menstrual Resources' and 'Life without tampons'. I have had my keeper for 6 months now and my periods are lighter, with less cramps. It's changed the way I feel about my period and it's so great to be free of tampons, hooray!

I hope to circulate my copy of Muse as widely as possible (I live in chch at the moment and my sister sent me a copy) starting with my partner; I told him I had gotten hold of a feminist magazine and he wants to read Muse too.

Can't wait for issue two,

Alofa, Mariana Isara

A photograph of a handwritten letter on lined paper, tilted slightly to the right. The handwriting is in black ink and is somewhat cursive. The letter is addressed to 'Dear Muses' and expresses gratitude for a zine found at a women's centre in Kapiti. The writer, Joanna Salter, mentions she studied feminism at university and is passionate about it. She offers to contribute an article about her experience in the NZ Army as a part-time soldier. She asks for a profile/information sheet and issue 2 to be sent if it's out yet. The letter ends with a thank-you and a signature.

Dear Muses,
Thank-you so much for the zine,
which I found in the Kapiti
women's centre.
I too am desperate to read something
not completely inane.
I studied feminism at uni last
year and am really passionate
about it.
I'd like to contribute an article
I wrote about my experience in
the NZ Army where I am employed
as a part-time soldier (territorial)
Could you please send me the
profile/information sheet and issue 2
if its out yet.
Thank-you once again,
sincerely, Joanna Salter



GRRRLS WHO
CLAIM IT: AN
INTERVIEW
WITH SINGER
TALI WILLIAMS

LT Louie

A woman's voice in a male-dominated music genre, **TALI WILLIAMS IS A 24 YR OLD HARD-CORE SINGER IN WELLINGTON CITY**, and talks here with LT Louie about what it was like to kick off into a male dominated scene and how her crazy loud growl has pushed through the gender politics in a politicized underground scene. Tali's band The Deadline has finally called an end to their era, but like the Pedal Faster times of before, she will reemerge with something new to knock your ears off.

SO TALI, THIS IS KIND OF AN EXIT INTERVIEW FOR YOU, SEEING AS YOU HAVE JUST FINISHED WITH THE DEADLINE.

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT ENDING THE DEADLINE?

We'd gone three years and just got to the end of it. We said let's do some new stuff now. It wasn't sad, it wasn't a difference in creative strategy or opinion, it was just the natural end of the band.

I've got a new thing on the horizon now with some of my friends who have been in hardcore bands before (Dan Fraser, Alex etc).

WHAT ARE YOUR MAIN MUSICAL INFLUENCES?

Early 90's political skate-core like 'choke hold', late 80's youth crew bands with positive messages, to have fun but be good to people, be good to each other, like 'youth of today' and '7 seconds'. And local bands because seeing something I could potentially do and be a part of gets me excited. One that comes to mind is 'diecast'.

YOU'VE BEEN INVOLVED IN THE HARDCORE SCENE SINCE FOREVER. WHAT'S CHANGED IN THE SCENE OVER THE PAST TEN YEARS?

Well I could either write an entire essay about this or give just a couple of statements. Basically, it's gone from the late 80's, early 90's underground with punk ethics- DIY, equality, skating, collectivity. Then around the 2000 to a popular music world where the image, music but not the ethic of punk became really popular. Suddenly it went from underground to not just above-ground, but commercial.

People who were part of the old-school had to re-think if the scene was now really where they wanted to be. But those people who left have started coming back in now and branching off into their own way. So it sort of went "you lot get out of my scene" to a realization that they were here to stay, and now there's an acceptance of that and a need to push things into a new way. (Interview suddenly turns into a rant about dialectical materialism?)

WHEN YOU CAME OUT WITH PEDAL FASTER YOU WERE THE ONLY WOMAN IN TOWN SINGING METALLIC HARDCORE. HOW HAS BEING A WOMAN AFFECTED THE WAY YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED THE SCENE, OR BEEN RECEIVED BY THE SCENE?

(Tali laughs sarcastically). When I first got involved in hard-core as such, and I don't mean punk, punk for me is a 50/50 thing as far as female/male goes, that was a different story for me, but when I first got involved in hard-core where I was the minority, I had to work really really hard, as hard as I possibly could to be taken seriously as a good musician, to be



respected as someone into politics and someone who thinks, to be respected by my peers. You know to not be seen as 'hey look at that girl over there looks really good or that girl is fat & ugly' and sitting quiet on the side-lines. I started just being who I was, respected for who I was. I guess I kind of hoped that the whole thing of being in a band would have a good impact on other girls, who will see and think 'hey I can get involved, I don't have to sit on the periphery, worrying about looking good or not looking good, or grabbing a guy or whatever. I can get involved in this scene, enjoy the music'. But you know I guess there's still the same (low level) involvement of girls now as there used to be and I don't know what to make of that? I don't know what that's about. I just...I know the only way to let people know they can do something is to show them the way, they (girls) come to shows, but how are they participating, the putting on the shows, the zine making, the record labels, the organising stuff?

THIS BRINGS ME TO MY NEXT QUESTION I GUESS, AND THAT'S WHAT DO YOU SAY FOR YOUNG WOMEN OUT THERE (AND I GUESS I'M ONE OF THEM) WHO LOVE THE MUSIC, LOVE THE SCENE, BUT ARE PUT OFF BY THE TESTOSTERONE, THE GENDER POLITICS AND SOMETIMES JOCK-ISH IMAGE IN HARDCORE?

Well one thing I'd like to say is get involved regardless. I guess you just have to realise that if you get out there as a girl it IS hard and you WILL be treated differently. There will be obstacles whatever you do, even if you are doing exactly what the guys are doing, you'll have a hard time. You have to put yourself out there, really be hard, be involved. Do the stuff you want to do and don't let the masculinity and tough guy image put you off or you'll never get involved and you'll just ruin yourself – and in the end it shouldn't be about that, it's about enjoyment.

DO YOU THINK THAT ONCE MORE WOMEN DO GET INVOLVED THE CULTURE WILL START TO CHANGE AWAY FROM THE TUFF GUY WITH TATS THING TO SOMETHING MORE INCLUSIVE?

I think that the branching off into the scene's original ethics that I spoke about earlier is happening now, people are starting to realise, in Wellington in particular. There was that big hiatus from DIY and the punk ethic around it, but that stuff's returning. For a while there was that whole 'wow we can get a bit of money out of this and score some chicks outa this' but things aren't so much like that anymore.


ANY LAST WORDS?

I want to put the discussion piece out there about – you know look at the involvement – who is dancing at shows, why aren't girls out there, why aren't girls getting involved? We need to be asking these sorts of questions within the scene. I'm not gonna give answers and tell people what to do but everyone needs to ask these questions. what I love about Wellington is that girls are getting up the front, but in Auckland you go to shows and it's like 'fuk' no girls are active here, what the hell? At our last show there were more girls than I've ever seen before, it was great. (Here I start to rant about how sux the Auckland scene is compared with Welly!)

GRANTED I WAS AWAY FROM HERE FOR A LONG TIME BUT I SEE THE WELLINGTON INVOLVEMENT OF GIRLS IS SO MUCH BETTER THAN AUCKLAND AND THAN IT WAS AND I DO THINK YOU'RE A LOT TO DO WITH THAT.

SO THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTERVIEW TALS.

Tali can be contacted to discuss her views, so get involved and get in touch:

fouramcollective@yahoo.co.nz 



Riot Grrrl?

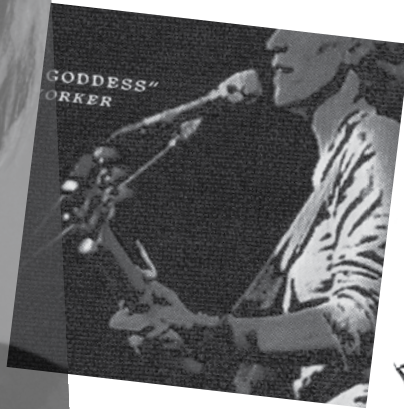
Jenn Jones

I don't own an ipod, I don't have my own computer to save MP3's on to, but I do have 143 CD's in my ever growing collection. Most I bought, some I burned, others given free on magazine covers. Of these 143 CD's however a pathetic FIVE are female artists or include female band members, and an even more pathetic ONE CD could be attributed to the feminist genre. Now being of quite strong feminist persuasion, I wonder where I went wrong, and why I have rendered invisible female artists, let alone feminist artists. So I've pledged to myself that the next five CD's I buy will be feminist, and they will be awesome.

I like Le Tigre – I saw them at the Big Day Out last year – but I only heard Ani Di Franco for the first time last year when I was in one of the Muse's cars. Apart from that, I have F Minus which is a hardcore band with one male and three (possibly down to two now I hear) female members including the singer/screamer. I think the problem is that I listen to mainly punk, hardcore, emo, rock etc, which are the most male-dominated music

types around it appears. There seem to be a substantial number of women in folk, pop and acoustic music, and although there are some great feminist artists in those genres I just don't listen to them. I would also argue that many female musicians who try and use a 'girl power' image tend to have a conflicting message in their song lyrics or attitudes – Ashlee Simpson and Avril Lavigne come to mind. Or the Spice Girls. I think it comes down to the fact that to get the really good female or feminist music you have to be in the know, or have a friend in the know to be able to hunt the albums down. Props to my friend Kat for being my feminist music guru!

In my search for what to buy I came across a term I had heard before, never gave much thought to or research time, but one which I can totally identify with and relate to: riot grrrl (or riot grrl). This is a movement as well as a description, and refers to women who are both feminist and punk, and who have a DIY attitude as well as wanting to stomp out sexism and yell "Revolution Girl Style Now!" Kat tells me that riot grrrl inspiration started in the 70's obviously with the women's liberation movement and early punk scene;



Jennifer Miro from The Nuns commented that the punk movement around the end of 1977 involved "...a lot of women in the beginning. It was women doing things. Then it became this whole macho, anti-women thing. Then women didn't go see punk bands any more because they were afraid of getting killed. I didn't even go because it was so violent and so macho that it was repulsive. Women just got squeezed out".

This was the case during the 80's onwards, but in the early 1990's women decided they had had enough. Riot grrrl spawned out of their anger at a testosterone-driven unsafe culture at punk shows and to redress the imbalance of power in society. There were strong riot grrrl movements in Seattle and Washington DC, which encouraged female-only bands, female-only gigs, and the creation of feminist zines which could challenge the status quo, raise awareness of rape, domestic abuse, sexuality, and feminism. Essentially, being a riot grrrl meant (and still does) that you don't believe in consumer culture, you do believe in making the world safer and more equitable for women, and you listen to hardcore and punk. Original bands included Bikini Kill (and

the original riot grrrl Kathleen Hanna) and Bratmobile.

I can say that even today in Wellington, punk shows are still generally male dominated (unless it's a Foamy Ed show), and I have definitely stopped going into the pit unless I know the crowd. When I was younger, 18 and 19, I definitely went in. I wanted to be one of the boys and I didn't mind the bruises. But now I just get angry when I get elbowed in the face, and guys don't seem to even care there are girls getting hurt and harassed. It's damn easy to grab someone's breast in a mosh pit and get away with it. And now I know that it's OK to feel pissed off about it and that other grrrls feel the same way (yes even in Welly).

So as a first step to doing something about the lack of feminism in my collection, my next five CD's will be Sleater-Kinney "The Woods" (2005), Bikini Kill "Pussy Whipped" (1993), Bratmobile "Pottymouth" (1993), L7 "Bricks are Heavy" (1992), The Gossip "That's not what I heard" (2001) and Le Tigre "Feminist Sweepstakes" (2000). And after that I may even get some Ani. From now on, call me a riot grrrl.

Granny Grace's lemon cordial

8 good sized lemons roughly sliced

4 1/2 cups white sugar

1.2 L boiling water

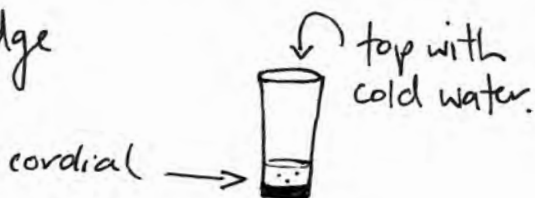


dissolve sugar in water with lemons.

When cool stir in 2Tbs of Tartaric acid.

Strain + bottle in clean bottles.

Store in fridge



- Chloe McGlashen

Opportunity to provide support

We are a small group of young women, living in Wellington, who have come together to create this free feminist zine. As a magazine, we wish to provide a space for women's voices, a forum for discussion, which enthusiastically encourages action, in a format that is easily accessible.

We all work on Muse in our own time but really need assistance to get copies printed and available.

Donations

If you can provide a donation to support the printing and the cost of materials for Muse then please do so using the following options;

- Fill out this form and send a cheque made out to
Muse Magazine, to PO Box 11731, Manners St, Wellington
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We are happy to follow up any correspondence or queries with a phone call.

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