

The Women & Gender Resource Action Center presents...

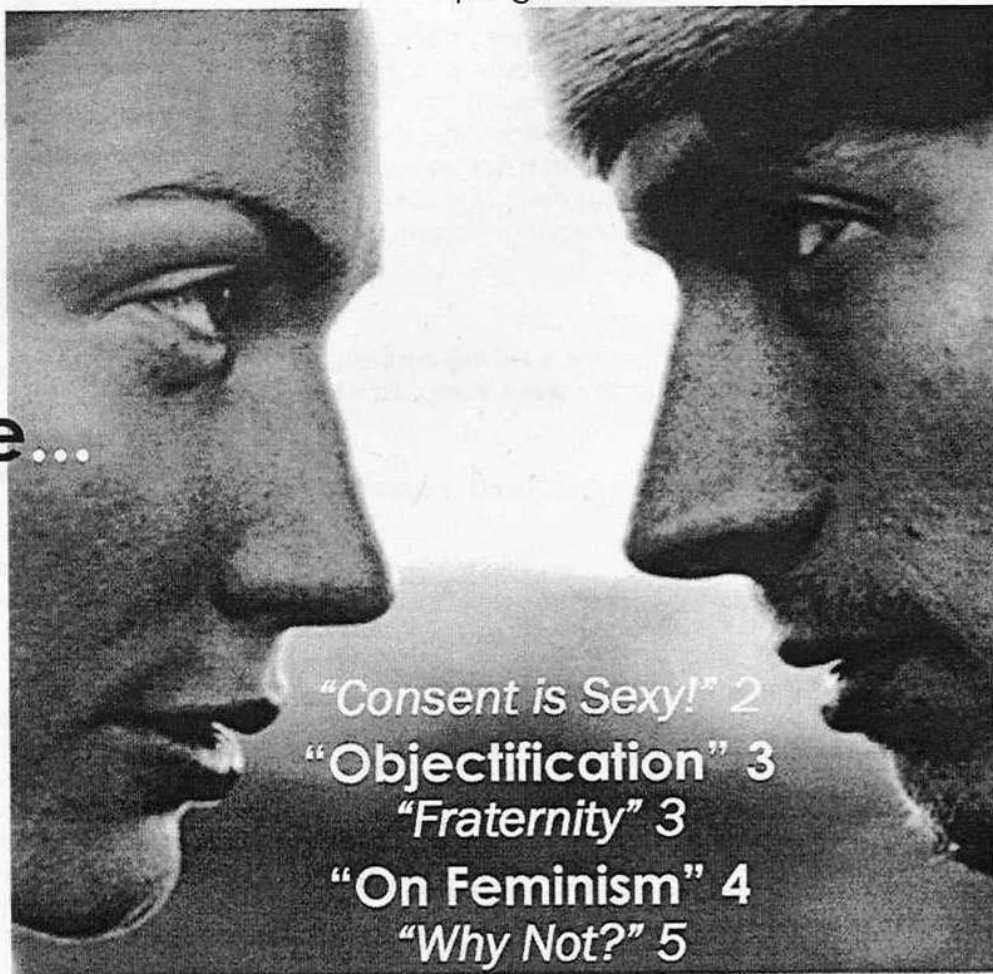
GENDER POWER

Promoting **Respect** for All People

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Editor:
**Cristina
Conti**

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Image from <http://www.sweden.se/>



Letter from the Director...

CONSENT IS SEXY!

What exactly does this consent thing mean?

"We've had a lot to drink, so are you sure you want to do this?"
"Are you OK with this?"
"Does this feel OK?"
"Do you want to keep going, or should we stop now?"

These are questions that lead to consensual sex, or stopping before non-consensual sex happens. These are also questions we forget to ask because we're too drunk or high, or we assume we know the answers. We—men, women and genders in-between—need to ask. All of us need to seek consent from our sexual/hook-up partner before we have sex. Mutually agreed upon sex is consensual sex. Non-consensual sex is sexual assault and rape. Drunk or high people cannot legally give consent.

What is consent?!

Consent is _____ (fill in the blank). Students tell me consent is...hot, fun, legal, delicious, beautiful, crazy great, romantic, sensual, empowering, powerful.... awesome!

Ask first....it's the difference between being arrested or expelled, or not.

Laura Lockwood

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WGRAC Mission Statement

The Women & Gender Resource Action Center is a place of advocacy, support, and welcome for all members of the Trinity and surrounding community. Through educational, social, and cultural programming, it seeks to promote women's self-determination and empowerment; awareness of gender inequalities; understanding among people of different economic classes, cultural backgrounds, religions, and gender identities; and the creation of a campus environment conducive to respectful interaction between women and men.

Letters to the editor are welcome. Please e-mail:

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Image from <http://www.uwstout.edu>

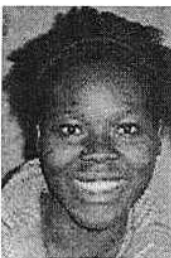
**You are more protected
by the law than you may
think!**

Here's part of Connecticut's
Criminal Penal Statutes Relating
to Sexual Abuse:

§ 53a-72a. Sexual assault in the third degree: Class D felony

(a) A person is guilty of sexual assault in the third degree when such person (1) *compels another person to submit to sexual contact (A) by the use of force against such other person* or a third person, or (B) *by the threat of use of force against such other person* or against a third person, which reasonably causes such other person to fear physical injury to himself or herself or a third person, or (2) engages in sexual intercourse with another person whom the actor knows to be related to him or her within any of the degrees of kindred...

This newsletter is available on the WGRAC website: www.trincoll.edu
(A-Z: click on "W"; click on WGRAC; go to Publications)



OBJECTIFICATION

By Ayesha Abdullah '09

Preliminary notice: Because of the length and scope of this article, certain details will be overlooked. The article comes from a hetero-normative position, but only in realizing this position and in recognition of that problem. I would go into more detail on the issue at hand, but unfortunately, this would go beyond the immediate scope of the article.

I recently overheard that women objectify men just as much as men do women. The student who said this supported the statement by saying that women often post "hunky" pictures of men on the walls of their dorm rooms. While I can understand this young student's concern over the objectification of males, I cannot agree with the magnitude and audacity of this student's argument. It cannot be denied that there is a long history of female objectification.



Whether the examples I give come from medieval courtly love to the modern sex industry, they all point to the historical position women have been traditionally placed in.

Fraternity

By Janaki Challah '11

O beautiful wine-bearer, bring forth the cup and put it to my lips.

O wine-bearer bring me wine, such wine not found in Heavens.

-Hafiz

I.

Grecian behind keg tap, such smug reconciliation with power—he hands out plastic cups glistening with liquid inebriation, distributor of phallic transmogrification. Sometimes he drinks, bubbling beer dripping down the edges of his mouth like golden spittle. And when foam dots his nose, he wipes it away, spills the rest of the cup over his head, as though drenched in new monsoon rain.

Basement reeking of beer and piss and semen, music swirling like a silken flame, dissipating into ears. My ears, cupped in heat as though an old lover's palms were against them—such reddening for dissonance. Not like that perusing boy with the backwards hat, whose cold hands went under my blouse, like steel and stealth.

II.

Trills of magenta matted over cheeks, lines of kohl dating back thousands of blackened fisheyes, puckered lips sweet with the scent of sandalwood, stained with wine-plum hues. What color to mask the plain tapestries of facial stricture! *I want to shimmer*, one thinks, slinky garment over curves, *I want to be the twinkle in those beautiful eyes*. But when salt-water puckers eyelids, when intoxication swivels in mimetic abysses, faces melt like black, linear stripes on a prisoner's blouse, and *those beautiful eyes* twinkle with the scent of malleability in somber departure; an entrance for the ox to plow fields after rain.

Unending contour of snow in a degree of bluest Celsius, like molten porcelain, locked under sheets of caustic ice. This little wretch sticks his hand in a hard pile, draws his hand out like a post-coital limb, lets a shower of sugar crystals dust the gravel—this little wretch says, *just you watch, guys. I'm fucking that one tonight*.

Perhaps a quotation from Otto Weininger may elucidate my argument:

It is only when man accepts his own sexuality, denies the absolute in him, turns to the lower, that he gives woman existence. When man became sexual he formed woman. That woman is at all has happened simply because man has accepted his sexuality. Woman is merely the result of this affirmation; she is sexuality itself.... Therefore woman's one object must be to keep man sexual.... She has but one purpose, that of continuing the guilt of man, for she would disappear the moment man had overcome his sexuality. Woman is the sin of man.

Continued on Page 8

III.

Slender young girls with bulbous breasts and flat abdomens: currency of all Dionysian festivities. Glossy, pin-like hair, long legs like bobby pins; flicker of diamonds in pretty lobes, sheen of pearls against defined clavicles—under orange light, my shadow elopes with a length not my own, and nothing of me strikes prismatic reflection. I cannot define currency for my worth—my curves are too wide, my stature too small.

IV.

Ice patters upon sheaths of snow, like confetti hitting linoleum. Unable to breathe slumber into eyelids, I stumble back to this alabaster cube, littered with wilted salad leaves in plastic bowls, bottles of coffee pushed dangerously to the side of my desk—such disheveled conditions for my brain! Nonetheless, within rinds of dissolution there is prophecy: a night of carnal grinding with no luck in conquest, (but what pollution for bottled limerence!)

I exhale. And only exhale.



ON FEMINISM...

By Alex Champoux '11



I was recently asked at dinner whether or not I consider myself a feminist, and what my views were on feminism. I replied no, and that, for the most part, I am disgusted with the feminist movement, insofar as it fails to achieve anything except draw the contempt of others and spout caustic rhetoric. The individual who asked this question immediately labeled me as ignorant, claiming that my description of feminism was outright wrong. That same individual carried the argument even farther by suggesting that I take a class on women, gender, and sexuality so that I could get "straightened out."

To these statements and suggestions, I take extreme offense. Simply because I do not choose to call myself a feminist does not mean that I think women shouldn't exercise the same rights and equalities as men. On the contrary, I believe that women deserve every right that we men do and that feminism, in itself, damages the chances of women to get those same rights. It is this non-affiliation with the feminist movement, yet continued support of women, that many feminists fail to accept as legitimate.

The very act that brought up this reaction from me is a perfect example of the flaws in feminism. Many feminists feel this need to showcase their devotion to their cause by getting in the face of other people and proving how much better they are than the non-feminist. Asking a person if they are a feminist and accusing them of ignorance/misogyny for not being so serves no purpose but to anger the person you are facing and project your image as someone who is simply in feminism for the recognition.

More helpful to the feminist cause than rubbing it in people's faces or bickering over semantics (freshman vs. "first year" or "vaginal orgasm" as a male construct to subjugate women to their pleasures), is simply pointing out the benefits of that same equality that we

are pursuing between men and women. Nitpicking over terminology and semantics while job inequality still exists, various religions debase women, and female representation in many forums is limited, simply put, brings many of the absurdities of the feminist movement to the front of the average person's mind.

I would like to point out to the individual, who thought it would be a good idea to get offended by my non-alignment with feminism, that my core group of friends are made up almost solely of females, and that, if this individual cared to ask those female friends of mine, I treat them with the utmost respect and as my equals. You might very well have a true dedication to securing equal rights for women, but, to me, from your actions, all I can see is a person with insecurities who is in feminism for the attention more than for pure goal of achieving equality. Moreover, I am not alone in this conviction, so I would counsel a re-evaluation of your approach to the feminist ideology and in your argumentative style; this is not a science fiction novel with white knights who represent absolute good and red dragons that represent the epitome of evil. There are plenty of sides to every battle and many more people fighting for women's equality than there are feminists.

I do not, and will never, consider myself a feminist, but that did not stop me from quitting a job, at which I was paid well, because the boss paid women fifty dollars less a week than the men. It did not keep me from choosing to support a girl for president of my class in high school, or from choosing to be friends with almost every girl I meet on campus. The feminist movement is too blind as it pushes forward for equality, too sensitive to gender issues, too ready to accuse. If I choose not to elect Hillary Clinton as my president, or even call her inept, corrupted, incapable of running our country, and, more bluntly, a bitch, it is in no way a statement that women are not fit to be president of the United States. It would be just the same if I worked for a company and chose to give a promotion to a man over a woman; one must look at the circumstances and evaluate whether or not the man was more qualified than the woman before making an accusation of sexism. Not everything is black and white, and the world is not divided into feminists and misogynists/women who have succumbed to male dominance.

Best of luck to the feminist movement in achieving their goals, and may women continue to gain equality as fast as they can.

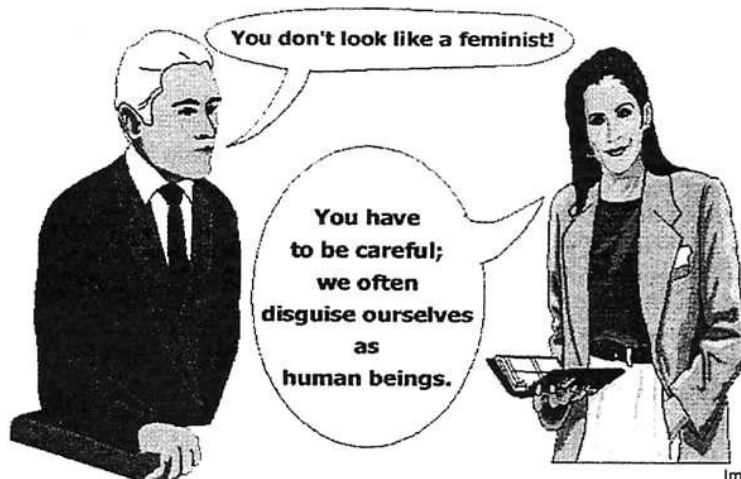
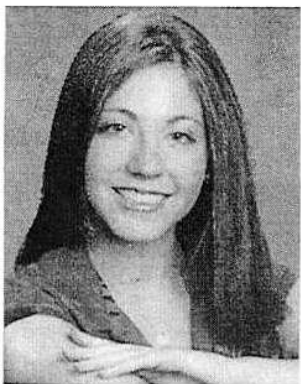


Image from www.cnr.edu



Response to Alex Champoux On Feminism: Why Not?

By Cristina Conti '11

Your incensed reaction and the "extreme offense" you took to my

simple question, "Would you consider yourself a feminist?" displays the appalling, untrue, and baseless stigma associated with feminism that prevents many people, including yourself, from identifying with the term when they truly espouse its aim: equality for women. Like it or not, the vast majority of feminists are not bitter "man-haters," as you said in our discussion. Feminists believe in the same goals as you said that you do: women should "exercise the same rights and equalities as men." Nearly every group, religious, political, or otherwise, has a radical faction that can be used to unfairly stereotype everyone in that group. Placing all feminists into one category is not right. I was not at all personally "offended" by your "non-alignment with feminism" and tried hard not to criticize your decision, but rather correct your unfounded claim that feminists are man-haters and the subsequent label you bestowed on them. This statement is "outright wrong" and "ignorant," even though I did not use the word "ignorant" until much later in our argument.

There is no one correct definition of feminism, but as Claire Nasuti, '08, a feminist, succinctly stated, "Feminism boils down to the belief that women are equal to men." According to the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, "Feminism is both an intellectual commitment and a political movement that seeks justice for women and the end of sexism in all forms." I do not see "man-hating" in either of those definitions or in any standard definitions anywhere, for that matter. Although you are right in stating that "the world is not divided into feminists and misogynists," a feminist movement is necessary to combat the sexism that is still very present in our society, which

was displayed in the company you worked for that paid women fifty dollars less than men.

As Robyn Williams, Trinity squash and tennis star, '11, pointed out after your Facebook note, were it not for Title IX, a direct result of the movement, girls would not be playing sports. It is not enough to just affirm "the benefits of that same equality we're pursuing between men and women" because most men are not going to simply give up their privileged position.

Too often, people are afraid to call themselves feminists because of its negative, radical connotation stemming from their uncertainty about the movement. The fear of being judged by other people and their resultant "insecurity" is also a factor in shunning the term. I was shocked that many strong women at Trinity who I greatly respect for their values and empowering decisions, when asked, replied negatively to my question. Most were very unsure of its definition and did not want to deal with the negative implications that they thought would ensue. Sam Dolgoff, '08, also a feminist, hit the nail right on the head when she commented, "So often feminism is construed as aggressive, and the whole point is we're trying to stop aggression against us. The stigma against this term was created as another way to keep this unequal power structure in place." The stigma is in fact a social construct to keep people from uniting against this very power structure.

It is unfortunate that you, and others like you, so adamantly refuse to don the term feminist, as you do not only support its cause, but are also an activist through sacrificing a well-paying job because of your honorable ideals. The respect you show for your many "lady friends" is also perfectly congruent with the tenets of the movement. I think that it is very admirable that you use these principles to guide your actions and that, based on these actions and your vehement feelings, you would prove to be a wonderful addition to

the movement if you ever chose to consider yourself a feminist.

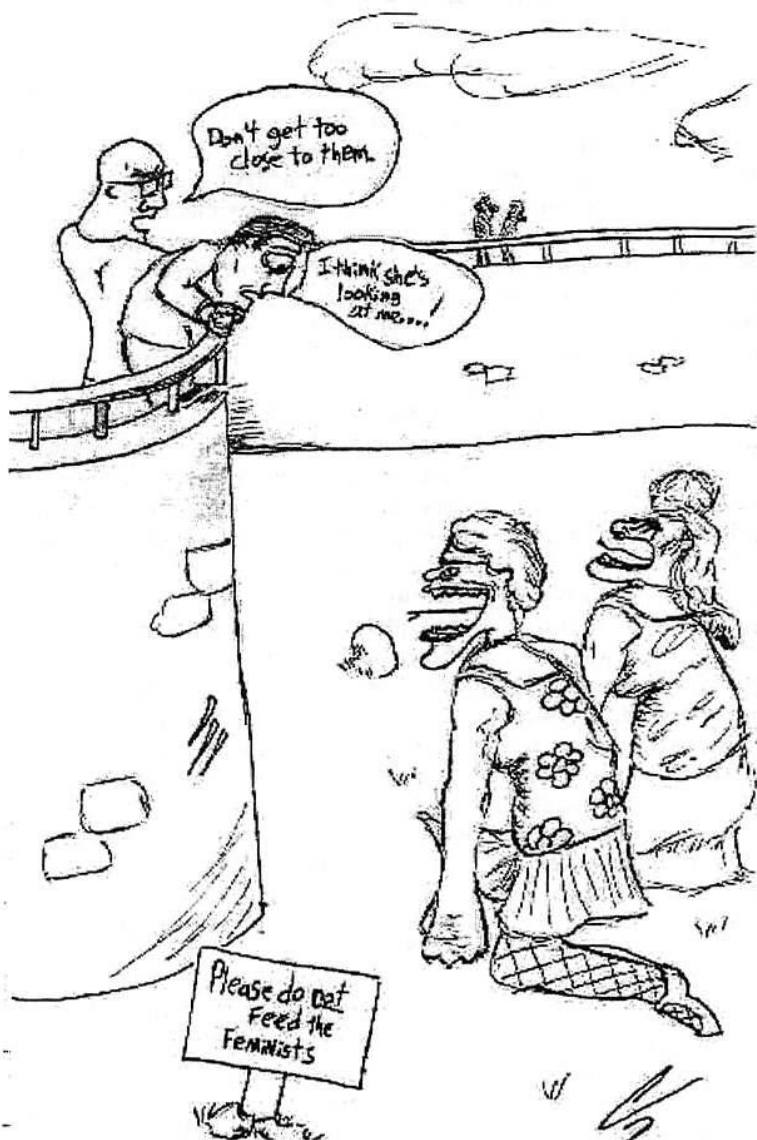
I am disappointed that you think feminism "fails to achieve anything except" to "draw" out "the contempt of others and spout caustic rhetoric" when the "showcasing" of your views on Facebook of our dinner conversation has evoked a similar feeling. Also, if I go by your definition of feminism, what purpose would it serve to be viewed as a man-hater if I am heterosexual? There is a great difference between "showcasing" one's views and asking a stimulating question to hear others' ideas and then expressing my opinion, which is my right. I never called you a misogynist, so please refrain from using this to bolster your argument. In regards to Hillary Clinton, if you do not agree with her policies, that is one matter, but calling her a "bitch" is extremely sexist and goes against the very principles you claim to uphold. This term is inherently sexist and degrading to women in general, especially as there is no equivalent word for men. The fact that after over two hundred years our country has not had a female president also proves the prevalence of sexism and need for the feminist movement as a catalyst for change.

I still recommend you to take a Women, Gender, and Sexuality course so that you can figure out what feminism is before bashing it. If after your research you have more validated qualms about the movement, I would be happy to hear and discuss them with you. But, I must thank you for bringing up a common misconception of feminists. This proves that despite the fact that feminism has a negative connotation now, its pure existence creates a dialogue for people to discuss the difficulties of solving gender inequality, to think critically about ways to solve this problem, and realize that our views are not that different after all. I am aware that some people who fight for women's rights do not call themselves feminists, I just ask the question **why not?**



PLEASE DO NOT FEED THE FEMINISTS!

Cartoon by **Cohlie Brocato**, Brooklyn College '11



**FEMINISM
IS THE RADICAL
NOTION THAT
WOMEN ARE
PEOPLE**



Clip from the Movie *Borat*

Borat, a representative from the country of Kazakhstan, is making a documentary on life in America. While traveling the country to learn the modern ways of Americans, he has an interview with a group of feminists representing the Veteran Feminists of America. Although the clip itself is hysterical and the movie is a riot, in my personal opinion, the conversation between the women and Borat is very frustrating and would incur frustration in any woman who considers herself a feminist.

- Ada Avila '11

Borat: So what it means this feminism?

Feminist #1: It's the theory that women should be equal to men in matters economic, social, and political.

Feminist #2: Now you are laughing, that is the problem.

Feminist #3: Definitely.

Borat: But is it not a problem that a woman have a smaller brain than a man?

Feminist #3: That is wrong.

Borat: But the government scientist, Dr. Yamakov prove it is size of squirrel.

Feminist #3: No, that is wrong.

Borat: Give me a smile, baby, why angry face?

Feminist #1: Well, what you're saying is very demeaning. Do you know the word demeaning?

Borat: No.

Check out the video "This is What a Feminist Looks Like" online:

<http://feminist.org/FeministVideo/index.html>



Just Friends?

By **Alessandra Siraco '11**

(Our Resident Carrie Bradshaw)

Girl and boy meet. Girl and boy fall in love, get married, and live happily ever after. Or maybe, girl and boy meet. Girl loves boy but boy doesn't love girl. Or vice versa. But can it ever be neither? Can a straight girl and a straight guy ever truly be just friends, with no feelings on either side at any point?

In my personal experience, this has never been the case. While I have had close guy friends—in fact, some of my best friends are male—there has always been a moment in time when one of us has felt something for the other. Even if it was just a split second, at some point in our relationship one of us has felt a spark. I have, however, had other guy friends with whom the more-than-friends issue has never even been a question—but these have not been the I-love-you, I'll-miss-you, die-hard-forever friendships.

Why is this? Why do close friendships between girls and guys always question the possibility of something more? My friend pointed out this idea to me about first-date antics: obviously, if you are friends with someone, your personalities match. You have already jumped over the hurdle of getting to know them. If you were to go out, there would not be that awkward first date

conversation. ("So where are you from? Do you have any siblings?...pause....") But then comes the important part. You are in the car. He is in the driver's seat, you are in the passenger's one. He pulls up to your house, stops the car, and turns off the engine. He faces you and leans forward, going in for the kiss. Is it movie-magical, music playing in the background, or is it just sort of...there, just something you're doing but doesn't feel right? We've already established that everything else works perfectly, so what prevents friends from taking this step towards happily ever after?

In the movie *When Harry Met Sally*, Harry (played by Billy Crystal) says, "No man can be friends with a woman that he finds attractive. He always wants to have sex with her" (www.imbd.com). Perhaps, like Harry says, it is physical attraction that dictates whether or not friends are ever more than just that. If all the other elements are there that create a friendship (which many believe is the basis for a lasting relationship), the only other thing needed is the attraction.

That is the reason, I believe, that all of my close friendships with males have straddled the line of some-

thing more. If you are so close to someone as to call them a best friend, why not take a step further and try for something more, something that you know would work out personality-wise—something where the only thing you need to figure out is if you are attracted to the other person? I suppose only time will tell if it's possible to become good friends with a member of the opposite sex yet never question the idea of becoming something more.



"Perhaps, like Harry says, it is physical attraction that dictates whether or not friends are ever more than just that."



**OBJECTIFICATION** *Continued from Page 3*

Here, Weininger's position is that woman is the projection of man's sexuality. She exists because of man's acquiescence to his sexuality and must keep man sexual in order to survive as woman. This quotation gets to the core of male objectification of women, its projection of sexuality onto women, allowing for this projection to become the perception of woman, which will eventually be embodied and reproduced by women "performatively," becoming her essence and necessity. Woman does not truly exist before she is man's sexual object. Indeed, in diluted form, one can see this attitude toward women in society today, hence television shows such as "Girls Next Door" and the popular magazine *Playboy*.

This notion of woman inherently exuding sexuality in order to seduce man is the basis of woman's embodiment of the need to be seen as attractive/ beautiful. That women are the target for the makeup industry, dieting advertisements, most clothing stores, etc., is a clear indication of what is expected of a woman today. To be sure, this is not an indictment for women to not wear makeup, etc., but to realize these projected ideals subject women to a particular standard, the standard that Weininger characterizes.

Even further, the ideals are forced onto women, unconsciously, to desire this notion of femininity as the essence of what it means to be a woman. This notion of femininity, then, is always reproduced in society, especially if one remains unconscious of its detriment. The desire to "act" in this traditional conception of the feminine, whether through appearance, movement, or disposition, becomes necessary to be regarded as a woman. This feminine ideal always comes down to objectification for women. Indeed, at root, that is the essence of the ideal: woman as beautiful object.

Though it is quite problematic in its construction and reproduction, masculinity does not carry the same extent of objectification in its entirety. Of course, it is extremely problematic that the masculine ideal consists of strong muscles and slender body. It is necessary to recognize the tendency on both sides toward objectification. I would have to say that women's objectification of men cannot be completely likened to the historically degrading objectification that women have undergone for centuries. Nor does equal misery on both sexes' part justify the problem. Surely, the fact that we are all sexual beings means that it is quite difficult to escape objectification entirely; yet, it cannot be denied that the alienation that ensues is detrimental to each person. Thus, the purpose is not to claim one sex's right to objectify the other, but to remind everyone to remain cognizant of objectification's prevalence in our society.

**CULTURE FUGITIVE**By **Fatima Jafri '08**

I am the daughter of the damp dusk
A place where the sun and the night dance to hymns of the *tabla*
Eastern rain gently kiss the clouds
And Western winds swirl like ribbons through the mountains.
I sleep in the valley of these mountains.

I escaped from a remote land called culture.
A place blanketed by obedience and expectations
Spun from wool in Peshawar
Sewn by machines in Pittsburgh
And carried on the back of a nomad.

I choked on residue of a distant place and ancient religion.
Coughing on dusty smoke that circled me,
Omniscient and looming.
Stern eyes ominously watched over me.
They cast judgments and slander while I gently slept.

Imprisoned in my own body
I was born a sinner.
My dancing hips exotic were to them
My mischievous eyes seen as brazen.

Impure when blood flowed out of me
Purified once blood flowed into the veins of another life
I tiptoed around the sacred and profane.

Culture!
I do not want vacuous pity
I am not a victim of my identity
No, your gender development projects have not helped
Yes, there are feminists over there.

Oh Culture!
I do not care for your disdainful looks
I am rooted here
No, I am not too Americanized
Yes, I still have shame.

But, I must go home now
Back to the valley that sings sweet songs of my past and future.
Like a phoenix that is invincible and free from the prison of time,
I arise from my own ashes, breaking the chains strapped to my body.
I pull off the heavy blanket.
Black hair billowing in the warm winds
I go on,
Laughing into the starry sea.

**PLEDGE FOR ACTION™**

1. Help others in potentially dangerous situations
2. Take action in confronting others when their judgment is impaired
3. Act to help prevent a sexual assault from occurring, though it may be difficult
4. Work to end sexual assault
5. Share with others the importance of *asking first*
6. Treat all survivors of sexual assault with respect
7. Fully support all friends, family and peers who have been sexually violated
8. Put this pledge into action immediately
9. Be actively committed to reducing violence within the Trinity community

Sign on to this Pledge at the WGRAC office today!



Image from <http://home.libac.cc.ca.us/~mlawrence/Phil%207/feminism.gif>

**WGRAC
Staff &
Volunteers**

Director: Laura Lockwood M'95

Director's Assistant: Cindy Dolores '08

Violence Prevention Coordinator:

Becky Loeb '10

PHAB (Promoting Healthy Awareness of the Body) Coordinator: Tara Finucane '08

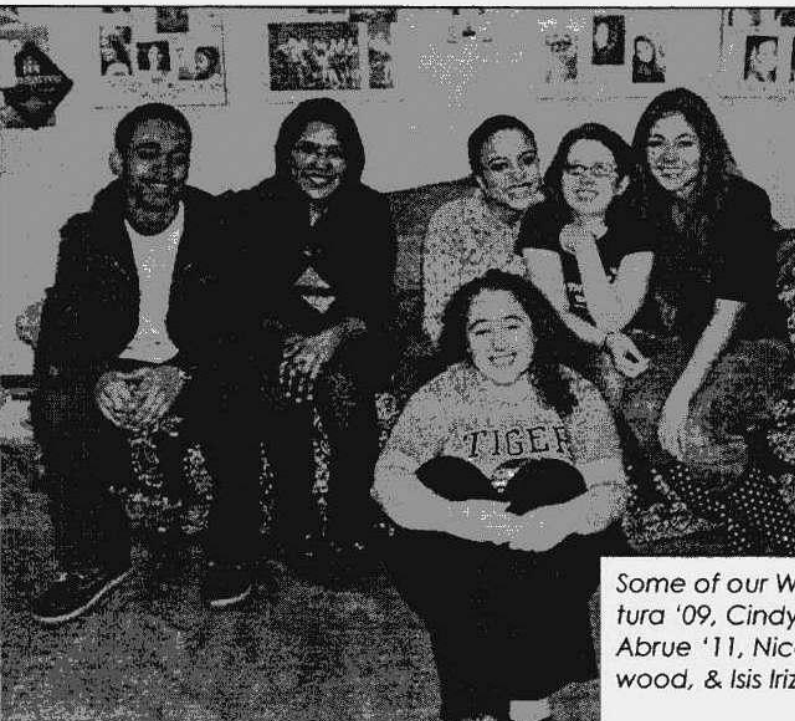
Newsletter Editors: Cristina Conti '11, Ayesha Abdullah '09, Beth Gromisch '09 (abroad)

MAC (Multicultural Affairs Council) Representative: Sylvia Tjioe '09 (abroad)

"Coming Out" Network: David Calder '08, Isis Irizarry '10, Julie Wilkinson '08, Sabiel Ventura '10

Student SART Members: Tanya Bulloch '08, Beth Gromisch '09

Office Volunteers: Rosalia Abreu '11, Tara Finucane '08, Beth Gromisch '09, Becky Loeb '10, Silvia Tjioe '09



Some of our WGRAC Warriors! (from left to right): Sabiel Ventura '09, Cindy Dolores '08, Becky Loeb '10 (on floor), Rosalia Abreu '11, Nicolette Laume '11, Cristina Conti '11, Laura Lockwood, & Isis Irizarry '10.

FOR EVERY GIRL WHO IS TIRED OF ACTING WEAK WHEN SHE IS STRONG, THERE IS A BOY TIRED OF APPEARING STRONG WHEN HE FEELS VULNERABLE. FOR EVERY BOY WHO IS BURDENED WITH THE CONSTANT EXPECTATION OF KNOWING EVERYTHING, THERE IS A GIRL TIRED OF PEOPLE NOT TRUSTING HER INTELLIGENCE. FOR EVERY GIRL WHO IS TIRED OF BEING CALLED OVER-SENSITIVE, THERE IS A BOY WHO FEARS TO BE GENTLE, TO WEEP. FOR EVERY BOY FOR WHOM COMPETITION IS THE ONLY WAY TO PROVE HIS MASCULINITY, THERE IS A GIRL WHO IS CALLED UNFEMININE WHEN SHE COMPETES. FOR EVERY GIRL WHO THROWS OUT HER E-Z-BAKE OVEN, THERE IS A BOY WHO WISHES TO FIND ONE. FOR EVERY BOY STRUGGLING NOT TO LET ADVERTISING DICTATE HIS DESIRES, THERE IS A GIRL FACING THE AD INDUSTRY'S ATTACKS ON HER SELF-ESTEEM. FOR EVERY GIRL WHO TAKES A STEP TOWARD HER LIBERATION, THERE IS A BOY WHO FINDS THE WAY TO FREEDOM A LITTLE EASIER.

