2013

The Va-Jay-Jay Revolution

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Recommended Citation
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Q: "How do you respond when a man asks you to 'smile for me, honey'?
A: "I always snap 'Why don't you dance for me, monkey-boy?ointedly, their stunned faces usually make my smile. Oh well,' - Jesi_Oh, tressugar.corr

CONFIDENCE

The world

makings the case

for equality

REVOLUTION

love

Vajay-jay

their stunned faces usually make my smile. Oh well, I'm just a

'Oh, honey?'
What's up with the word "bitch"? Urban Dictionary explains:

1. bitch ... the act of whining excessively; modern-day servant; usually degrading in status; term used to explain hardship (i.e. "Ain't that a bitch!").
2. An exceedingly whipped guy who does/wears/thinks/says whatever his girlfriend tells him to (i.e. "He is so her bitch... He's wearing plaid.").
3. Annoying and whining female; female dog; a woman who says things that, if she were a man, she would get assaulted for or using her position as a woman as a shield (i.e. "I can't believe what that bitch gets away with saying."). To tell you the truth, I'm a little jick of it. I mean, getting down to the origin of the word itself, bitch simply means "female dog." or if you go back really far, it might refer to other "beasts." Of course there is the occasional reclamation of the word (as Urban Dictionary also includes, "A woman that doesn't give a flying f*ck anymore and that can and will be cruel to men") but I'm not too crazy about the man-hater association. Aside from the idea that the word feminizes anything that is annoying or abrasive, it's use in relation to violence is what is particularly alarming. For example, an Urban Dictionary user eloquently states: "Woman who for one reason or another deserves a good bitch-slap."

The user's next definition? "To talk or act such as a woman." So, if you talk or act like a woman, you deserve a "good bitch-slap"?

"Bitch Magazine. Ok, good. So if we're gonna reappropriate the word, let's use it. Use it as a positive. Use it correctly. But please just let's not forget about its relevance to violence against women. It's not used correctly.
Women who were not superheroes were primarily portrayed three ways:

1. Career-oriented girls: Nellie the Nurse, Tessie the Typist, and Millie the Model, each of whom appeared in comic books geared toward female readers using the types of jobs that non-wartime women of the era typically worked.

2. Romance stories: could be the Good Girl or the Bad Girl. A good girl gets her heart broken; the bad girl breaks all the boys' hearts.


Trina Robbins, The Great Women Superheroes:

"Most pulp-style action stories either starred or featured strong, beautiful, competent heroines. They were war nurses, aviators, girl detectives, counterspies, and animal skin-clad jungle queens, and they were in command. Guns blazing, daggers unsheathed, sword in hand, they leaped across the pages, ready to take on any villain. And they did not need rescuing."

William Marston (creator of Wonder Woman):

"Not even girls want to be girls so long as our feminine archetype lacks force, strength, and power. ... Women's strong qualities have become despised because of their "weakness". The obvious remedy is to create a feminine character with all the strength of Superman plus all the allure of a good and beautiful woman."

After WWII & the Comics Code, DC sent a memo:

"The inclusion of females in stories is specifically discouraged. Women, when used in plot structure, should be secondary in importance, and should be drawn realistically, without exaggeration of feminine physical qualities."

During the 70s, comics reflected many of the feminist tensions of the era. The number of female characters, both heroes and villains, increased substantially. However, they were often stereotypical, like the angry-feminist parody, Man-killer. Marvel's first female superhero, Invisible Girl, debuted, & by 80s she is Invisible Woman. & more assertive/powerful) Ms. Marvel debuted with the honorific 'Ms' & her alter ego was the editor for 'Woman Magazine'.

In '94, 92.9% of DC comic book readers were men (Robbins Superheroes 207). The comic industry & readership became extremely male-dominated, & the portrayal of women suffered: violence and sex saturated the medium.

Women in Refrigerators Syndrome: "describes the use of the death or injury of a female comic book character as a plot device in a story starring a male comic book character. It is also used to note the de-powering or elimination of a female comic book character within a comic book universe."

The comic industry is well-known for its communication with its consumers. What the readers demand, the creators work into the stories. The books end up very reflective of who reads them, and their opinions and views. In a medium used to tell stories that are driven by power-traditionally male power-it's important to see women characters as equally powerful and heroic as their male counterparts.

Little Lotta 1953-72

An interesting representation of a usually taunted character: the tubby girl. But Lotta's no loser- she's the loud, fun, life of the party, & she'll eat everything in sight (after eating billions of soggy rice & her friends of course).

Little Lotta 1953-72
There is such pressure in beauty pageants to fit a stereotypical, societal and MEDIA-based depiction of "BEAUTIFUL". Not surprisingly, several contestants end up with eating orders, or suffering depression. Lacking self-esteem, this concern of their body image literally becomes an obsession. This depressing and competitive streak in beauty pageants negates from the true beauty in a woman, in any person- intelligence, wisdom, personality. The media's portrayal of this "perfect" woman, that appearance is of utmost importance, is quite distressing.
Disasters

When looking at the correlation between religion and women's rights, we see that religion is one of the "basic causes of the violation of women's rights." (Jimmy Carter)

Oppression

Humanism

"Women are inferior human beings in the eyes of God." - St. Paul

The New Testament

H.H. Dalai Lama calls himself a feminist

"When looking at the correlation between religion and women's rights, we see that religion is one of the "basic causes of the violation of women's rights." (Jimmy Carter)"

This New Year, make some changes for the better.

"...Changes for the "better"... In 2008, more than 160,000 individuals in the United States underwent cosmetic surgery. The saddest part about this, to me, is that each of the 160,000+ was under 19 years old. How depressing it is to think that each young adult, or child even, is so unhappy with their natural selves, what they can't accept their natural beauty, their imperfections. Even more depressing is to think of what kind of parenting is going on here."
"Now that the initial shock and awe surrounding 90210's upcoming lesbian love story has worn off..." Shock and awe? Worn off? Okay, so I WAS shocked and awed by this. Ew. Is that really how weird it is for me to see two girls kiss, even though I consider myself pretty in touch with the LGBT community? Even though I've done it myself? I guess it's about time someone decided to portray a somewhat accurate relationship. Rebecca Sinclair claims that she wanted to "find the right way to tell a modern story about being a... non-entirely straight" teenager. I've been relieved to see it's not the stereotypical queer relationship you usually see on TV. My favorite part? Adrianna has a WHOLE CONVERSATION on-screen about not falling under any specific label, but perhaps somewhere in the middle. I love Silver (the one who first suggests the non-categorizing-concept)—a proud feminist on the show! My guilty pleasure just got a little less guilty.

"But once we get past the gayness..." with once we get past the gayness of it all, it's really just a story about two people connecting."

Adrianna + Gina
Most women, especially in urban areas, have had to deal with the routine of street harassment. But instead of stewing in silent anger, New York blogger Emily May offers an alternative revenge: HollaBackNYC. The tagline on the homepage puts it nicely: "If you Can't Slap 'Em, Snap 'Em!" The site allows women and LGBT people who have been harassed on the streets of NY to post photos of their harassers, along with the story of the incident (detailing time and location, among other details). The site has spawned similar sites in other US cities, and now other countries (even the African island Mauritius)! There's also a linked YouTube account with videos of real women telling their stories.

On the site May explains, "Many people, particularly men, are unaware of the frequency and severity of disrespect and intimidation that numerous folks, especially women, experience in public spaces on a daily basis. HollaBackNYC aims to expose and combat street harassment as well as provide an empowering forum in this struggle." Spotlighting this behavior in such a context is great consciousness-raising, as it frames the 'ritual' of catcalls as an oppressive, damaging practice. Once it's widely understood to be offensive acts instead of 'humorous' joking, those who witness it will also feel empowered to fight back, even if they're not the harassed. The Youtube videos, where women explain why they choose to holla back, are powerful firsthand accounts that put real faces, stories, and emotions to the problem. Hopefully this, combined with posting the faces (however blurred or blatant) of harassers will embarrass everyone into doing their part to end this juvenile behavior.

How exactly should we define street harassment?

It's a sticky question, and I know that everyone wants an easy answer on that. Street harassment is really up to the women themselves. It's not my job to decide what hurts a woman when she walks down the street.

So the line is where it creeps someone out?

I've decided it's harassment if it's not just annoying, if it's scary -- but where that line between annoying and scary is depends on what your life experience is. We have a lot of women who are extremely affected by street harassment because they are survivors of some other form of violence against women. Street harassment, to them, feels like ripping a scab off.

And why does anyone have to push that line in the first place, right?

Exactly, and you know, for some women, even something like "Good morning" is too much. The world I want to create is a world where people can say, "Good morning," and the implication isn't that it's sexual.

On my Semester abroad, my class visited 13 countries & circumnavigated the globe. In every country, we saw people struggling to survive, but I was shocked to realize I common denominator: those who lived in the worst conditions, with the least rights & opportunities, were all WOMEN. I'd never before connected the dots to see how truly desperate the situation of women's rights was & how it impacted EVERY other oppressed group. It was at the core of so much discrimination, I understood what my professor meant when she said "Every issue is a women's issue."

Why I Hollaback: Polina's Story

Why I Hollaback: Samantha's Story

Why I Hollaback: Janna's Story

Why I Hollaback: Julianne's Story

Why I Hollaback: Sam's Story

Why I Hollaback: Tanya's Story

Why I Hollaback: Sharmaine's Story

Why I Hollaback: Megan's Story

Why I Hollaback: Shikha's Story

How Semester Made Me Realize I'm a Feminist

South Africa reports over 30% of pregnant test HIV+; we visited an orphanage for HIV+ children.

For a day in Mauritius, an African island, we visited a P's prison, a rehab for addict mothers & their kids, a P's marketplace, & a refuge center for pregnant teens; in Mauritius are so uneducated, prostitution & drugs affect 1 in 4.

In Japan is Awesome!