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Women's Studies & Gender Studies Program

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Special Themed Issue on:

Definitions, Treatments, Exchanges, & Identities

The Body

QUICK RESOURCE LINKS

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to the continually revamped digital Digest magazine.
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The WSGS Mission:
Founded in 1979, Loyola’s Women’s Studies Program is the first women’s studies program at a Jesuit institution and has served as a model for women’s studies programs at other Jesuit and Catholic universities. Our mission is to introduce students to feminist scholarship across the disciplines and the professional schools; to provide innovative, challenging, and thoughtful approaches to learning; and to promote social justice.

The DIGEST Mission:
Since 2007, the WSGS weekly digest has grown from a listing of upcoming events, grant opportunities, and other announcements to an interactive digital publication in the style of a feminist zine. The Digest’s mission is to connect the WSGS program with communities of students, faculty, and staff at Loyola and beyond, continuing and extending the program’s mission. We provide space and support for a variety of voices while bridging communities of scholars, artists, and activists. Our editorial mission is to provoke thought and debate in an open forum characterized by respect and civility.

Click HERE to Contribute! (guidelines)
We encourage Loyola students and staff, and ALL readers, to share with us, small or large, simple or complex.
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Dear readers,

This is the second to last issue of the year and our final themed issue before next semester. I hope you’ve enjoyed reading so far, and I hope I have remotely filled the shoes of your first editor and the founder of The Digest Magazine, J. Curtis Main. It has been an amazing ride so far, and I am particularly pleased with how this issue is turning out.

Two of our columnists have chimed in to talk about The Body. Nlw gives us her take on letting children wear what they want, and Eman saucily answers the question: “Are all attractions a kind of fetish, including heterosexuality?” There are quotes about the repulsion and attraction to fat from author and theorist Laura Kipnis, a series of vintage weight gain ads for MadAds, and a coincidentally on-topic photograph from the Women and Leadership Archives.

Also, we have a powerful, personal anecdote from Ida Sefer Roche called “Occupying This Body Since 2009.” It was just what this issue needed: a testimony to how far we have to go in accepting each other’s (and our own) bodies.

I’ve included an excerpt from my critical biographical sketch of Germaine Greer, the second-wave feminist who wrote *The Female Eunuch* and many other books about women, their bodies, and their place in the world. Hopefully it is just enough information to explain how Greer helped change the conversation about women’s sexuality and bodies, but also how her critiques and theories fell a little short of the mark as regards homosexuality, transpersons, etc.

Also included are a series of three questions and responses about bodies, attraction, and sexuality. Thanks to everyone who took the time to thoughtfully respond to the prompts. If we give each other the space to speak and listen, that’s how we can learn from each other and learn about ourselves. It keeps the conversation going and gives us a sense of where the most work needs to be done.

If you have suggestions about how to make The Digest a little bit better, I’d love to hear what you think!

Thanks so much for reading,

Brandie Rae Madrid
bmadrid@luc.edu
While at home for Thanksgiving last week, my mother and I sat down with a big box of old family photos. We haven’t quite gotten into the whole scrapbooking thing yet, so we have years and years worth of pictures stowed away. I had a great time, laughing at my parents’ huge Afros and my brother’s ginormous 80’s glasses. Fun was had by all, until a picture caught my eye. Typical 90’s picture, full of multi-colored t-shirts and the matching shorts, terrible haircuts, etc. My brothers and I looked HORRIBLE. Incredulous, I looked at my mom and said: “You let us go out of the house looking like this?!” She laughed in her sweet little way and stated that she let us dress the way that we wanted. “It was the style at the time,” she pointed out. Still, we looked pretty awful.

We found a whole heap of my high school pictures and the disgust rose again. “Really, ma? A Simpsons t-shirt, purple corduroys, black combat boots and a choker? Why didn’t you tell me I looked like a Hot Topic reject?” She laughed it off and again said that I dressed the way I wanted and it wasn’t her fault that I thought Doc Marten’s were the coolest things on the block. “Besides, we would have drawn the line if you wanted to wear something really crazy.”

To me, that raises a good point. I often think about having kids and what kinds of rules/restrictions they will have, and what kind of parent I will turn out to be. I think about the activities I want them involved in (sports, music), what kind of church they’ll be raised in, and even the colleges that they’ll end up attend (anything except for Duke is fine by me). I honestly have never thought about how they will dress or how they will want to dress. I would like for them to be able to make their own choices when it comes to clothes, but I also know that there are some trends that I would not be on board with.

Even now, I look at what the youth of America are wearing and I know there is no way I would want my kids wearing sagging skinny jeans. Absolutely. No. Way. On the other hand, if that’s the worst decision they’re making, I really can’t be upset about it. I think that it gives kids a sense of self and autonomy to be able to make some decisions, especially when most other decisions are made by parents, schools, etc.

As a society, we do place more emphasis on what women wear versus men, and it is no different for kids/teenagers. Right now, I feel that my kids can make those decisions about what they choose to place on their body, but I know that I will be scrutinizing my daughters’ wardrobes more closely. Our society is overly sexualized, and portrays girls as “sexy” at younger and younger ages. Just go to the girl’s section at any department store. You can find low-cut shirts, short skirts/dresses and heels (yes, heels) in the section for girls 13 and younger. A 13 year-old girl should never be considered “sexy” under any stretch of the imagination, but that seems to be the message they are inundated with at every turn.

I want my daughters’ to feel like they are more than just their bodies’, so clothes like that would be completely out of the question. As for my sons…as long as they shower everyday and look somewhat presentable (saggy skinny jeans do not fall into that category), I know that I will not be picking through their closets with a fine-toothed comb. Double standard? Absolutely! But I would have no choice in a world that attempts to paint females with a sexy brush as soon as they pop out of the womb. My children will be able to choose their own clothes, and I hope that as a parent, I will instill in them the wisdom and knowledge to make good decisions. If they look back on pictures in 30 years and are horrified at the trends that they wore, it definitely won’t be my fault.

Click here to CONTRIBUTE (guidelines)! We encourage ALL readers to share with us, small or large, simple or complex.
Are All Attractions a Kind of Fetish?

Are all attractions a kind of fetish, including heterosexuality? The question opens a flurry of thoughts I had never explored. Thinking of fetishes as any object or non-genital part of the body that causes a habitual erotic response or fixation, I could very well support the idea of all attractions—even those considered the norm (heterosexuality)—as a kind of fetish.

What attracts you to the opposite gender? Same gender? In discussions with my friends and acquaintances, it is clear that some have erotic responses or are fixated by certain non-genital parts or objects associated with a particular gender.

In some casual examples that support the idea of all attractions as a kind of fetish, the first that comes to mind is a woman’s ASS and TITTIES. What hetero man is not obsessed with one or the other or both; then again what les, bi, non-hetero woman is not obsessed with those curves! Similarly my straight girl friends rave about men with defined stomachs, backs and arms, as may lesbians feel the same about a stud/butch athletic woman with similar definition. Rock-hard bodies can generate rock-hard clits/dicks, go figure!

Aside from body parts, another common attraction is some material things like a pricey car or sparkling diamond piece. Now I know this may not be you but there are songs like this one titled “money makes me cum.” Other lyrics and songs suggest richness produces wetness. Dirty, yes I know, but there is a culture of women that will get wet and excited over material things and baller statuses. Comparatively, there are men whose things go ping! at the sight of a power woman in a suit and heels.

Through all the jest and some truth, attractions are some sort of fetish. In viewing it in this manner, it does create another prospective in analyzing other sexualities aside from heterosexuality as normal. If all attractions share similarities across the board, whose to say one’s more normal than the other.
Laura Kipnis on Fat

quotes from her chapter called "Life in the Fat Lane"

Our intense wish for fat’s absence is just what ensures its cultural omnipresence.

A book on measuring fat spent over three years on the New York Times best-seller list: no other subject can so reliably incite Americans to actually read.

That fat might contain erotic charge in a culture so maniacally devoted to achieving thinness that vomiting food is a national epidemic among college women makes either no sense or perfect sense, depending on how you understand the relation between sexuality and the larger social context.

Fat is a site of deep social contradiction. Fat is something a significant percentage of the American public bears not only undisguised contempt for, but also in many cases, an intense, unexamined, visceral disgust.

Fat hatred is more or less demanded by the culture, not to mention the last remaining protectorate of safe bigotry.

“IT's not healthy to be fat,” we proclaim knowledgeably as we reach for the little pink envelope of chemical compounds known to cause fatal disease in lab rats, or as we ingest glutinous and ill-conceived oxymorons like nonfat desserts.

In fact, the visual taste for thinness—fairly hegemonic since the end of World War I—far preceded current medical notions about fat: medical ideology followed fashion rather than vice versa.

More or less since the beginning of the century, thinness began to be affiliated with wealth and higher social standing, whereas fatness now tends to be associated both stereotypically and factually with the lower classes.

Interestingly, all the cliches—that fat is more tolerated further down the social ladder, or that there’s a greater consumption of pork rinds and doughnuts—are not so much the case as that fat is actually a predictor of downward mobility: if fat, you have a lower chance of being hired, and if hired a lower chance of being promoted.
THIS WEEK’S FOCUS: VINTAGE BODY POLITICS

• Women (and men) have been targeted by companies for a long time to change their shape and body size, but it hasn’t always been as fat-phobic as it is today. Skinny-phobia was all the rage in years past (although it can be argued that we now have a fear of being on either end of the spectrum).
• Does the ad that targets skinny men still police the way women are supposed to look?
• The ads seem to focus on having a fuller figure in order to attract a partner, but they also tend to tie in an idea of wealth (e.g. “afford” and “glamour”). Do today’s ads also use ideas of class and affluence to promote slender bodies?
“If being a woman is more accurately conceived as a state which fluctuates for
the individual, depending on what she and/or others consider to characterize it,
then there are always different densities of sexed being in operation, and the
historical aspects are in play here.”
- Denise Riley, Feminist Historian

From: WLA—Visions: A Highlight of Chicago Women Artists
“1995: Getting in Shape”

In this photograph:
Digital print of “Getting in Shape,” a sculpture by Mary-Ellen Croteau.

• The WLA has a new addition to their archives, a section called Visions: A Highlight of
Chicago Women Artists. This artwork was featured on the first page of listings.
What do you see?

The above photo is part of WLA’s special digital collection called Visions: A Highlight of Chicago Women Artists.

(Click the paragraph below to jump to the WLA website and the paragraph above to jump to the photo collection.)

The Women & Leadership Archives (WLA) collects, preserves, organizes, describes, and makes available materials of enduring value to researchers studying women’s leadership activities. The WLA strives to promote knowledge and understanding of women’s many diverse and important contributions to society through active collection development, research, and the facilitation of learning about women’s history. The Women & Leadership Archives functions as a public facility in addition to serving the Loyola University Chicago community.
Responses to:
“What is attraction? Where does it come from?”

it’s that unnamed force that brings two people together. You can’t put your finger on why, or what but it just …is. Perhaps a smell, a gesture, a look….it draws you and doesn’t let go.

-Ting-Ting Nuno

my eyes, my throat and it goes down. it’s like a warmth and it is almost always a surprise(single) so it happens by chance instead of renewal. it feels like excitement, it is exciting. thats what i got for now.

-Emilio Maldonado

The question, what is attraction? and where does it come from? differs depending if you ask me or my c**k first.

-Matthew Buist

Ah, but isn’t that just it? Attraction is that which cannot be defined, the invisible thread that reaches out between two people for so many different reasons, some transient, some shallow, some as deep as bone. It might be possible to put whatever qualities you (or your c**k) find attractive into words, but the thing itself is the stuff of poetry (even when it’s just lust). Just my two cents, of course!

-Blythe Hurley

In this regard, we are all poets.

I doubt that there’s another facet of the human condition so deserving of the term “ethereal” as what and whom we yearn to be intimate with. Attraction is invariably individual, and yet also wholly universal...
in this regard, we are all poets. indeed.

-Will House

Speaking generally as a man, initial attraction to a woman in-person comes from an immediate desire to copulate with her based on a specific body type or aesthetics which I like personally. If I discover that she shares my values and moreover my own interests, that only enhances my attraction. Attraction in me begins with the baser desires, but can quickly progress cerebrally. I have been attracted to women who do not fit a physical archetype I like, but do share my interests and ambitions; however this type of attraction takes cultivating over time. Although stereotypical, attraction does stem from an immediate desire to copulate.

-Benjamin Capps

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Responses to “What is attraction? Where does it come from?” [continued]...

Attraction is when someone earns your heartstrings. It comes from them, and whether they pull intentionally or unintentionally it’s very hard for you to let go.

-Vance Velez

I think attraction comes from a part of you you were unaware existed, that corner of your mind and soul that you really paid no attention to until that person who breaks through all the boundaries you’ve built for yourself finally shows up, usually when you don’t expect them.

-Laura Pickard

It originates in your stomach like a thirst after drought.

When you look up and see something that makes you want it more than anything else you’ve ever wanted you salivate, become dizzy, your vision becomes hazy, and control over your hands becomes difficult. It originates in your stomach like a thirst after drought, it moves up your spine causing goose-flesh to form on your extremities, then you realize your eyes are locked on the object, you’re staring.

-Matthew Williamson

Suppressed childhood drama.

-Brian Jorgensen

Attraction is extremely complex pattern recognition mixed with intense curiosity. There is a definite emotional component, but no requisite subsequent sexual response - however, that happens sometimes.

-Erica Johnson

Sharing in the struggle and intensity of survival and pleasures; energy is magnetic, and we push into and pull one another in these magnetisms... we attract.

-Curtis Main

Attraction is surrounded by ephemeral mystery, and the transient, incremental hope of your own slowly evolving salvation. It is the search for that supply of clarity that can only be found in the soft touch and gentle caress of a lover’s hand moving with earnest desire across your flesh.

-Jason Tuller

Attraction is an electric magnetism that draws people together. When I feel it, it is almost electrifying. I have felt it with friends, significant others, and random strangers when I meet them. It is almost like we are drawn to meet.

-Crystal Battin

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Responses to:
“If a woman wants to be objectified, can she still be a feminist? What does self-styling have to do with gender politics?”

To me it depends a great deal on the social-sexual consciousness level of the woman involved. (Yes I know I just made that term up, bear with me.) If you do it only because you think men like it, that’s kinda sad (IMO). If you do it because it turns “you” on, both just for yourself and also because it turns “them” on, isn’t that empowerment?

I mean, let’s face it, there are things men like about the way women look -- even the most enlightened, woman-supportive, educated, forward-thinking men out there. Taking those desires and consciously playing with them seems sexually confident, powerful, and sex positive to me -- as long as it isn’t just about what “he” wants. And anyway, isn’t feminism supposed to be about having the freedom to make the choices that feel right to you?

It’s like when I wear my favorite heels or sexy boots. I feel like a million bucks in them, and that makes me feel confident and sexy, and between the shoes themselves and the way they make me feel, the men can’t help but sit up and take notice. What’s wrong with that? If they bother to talk to me at all, they’ll get turned on by my mind eventually too, believe you me. :) Isn’t it all just part of the mix?

-Blythe Hurley

Isn’t that empowerment?

It depends on what you think the core of feminism is. If you take a rights-centric view, then the answer is “absolutely.” It’s 100% feminist for a woman to make her own choices and exert control over her own life, even if that means being objectified.

If you’re a McKinnon-ite, then obviously you are going to take a dimmer view of the whole thing. Personally, I’m a classical feminist: I think the McKinnon approach merely involves subverting a woman’s desires to McKinnon’s preferences rather than those of men, which IMO isn’t ultimately all that much better.

(To clarify: there are obviously views beyond just those two, but they make for a nice point-counterpoint.)

-Craig Stern

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Responses to “If a woman wants to be objectified, can she still be a feminist?...” [cont.]

Femininity is loving yourself as a woman. Women are beautiful creatures. We know it and I don’t think it is wrong to share that beauty.

-Crystal Battin

I think as long as some women are objectified against their will, choosing to be objectified comes from a place of privilege. Conforming to a beauty ideal (in order to be objectified) is a choice that isn’t really open to everyone. When all people have access to the same choices (despite race, class, physical/mental ability, etc), only then can that decision be made freely.

-Andrew Zapke

Appearance may give an assumed philosophical adherence, but that doesn’t make it real.

It depends on the degree to which and realm of identity within she objectifies herself. It also depends on the degree of awareness and deliberateness of her self-objectification, and so it requires not so much a comprehensive awareness of the consequences of objectification on a larger and cross-cultural scale, but a valuing of being aware of those consequences. There is a big difference between a woman deliberately assuming an objectified role as an aspect of sexual identity, or even portraying the image of objectivity, and a woman who is raised to believe she is secondary to and worth less than man (or to whites, if she is non-white, and so on), or a woman who defines her worth according to her use to a man (whether sexually, emotionally, or so on).

People need not dress as their ideology all the time, given that ideologies are (ought to be) fluid and contextualized. But someone who values feminism ought to be cognizant of their appearance and style themselves accordingly, depending on the local cultures, attitudes and geography they expect to navigate. I wouldn’t say there’s any blanket rule decreeing appearance: representation and expression of one’s self depends on the particular contexts, and should be deliberately decided accordingly so.

-Gabe Robin

First question, yes she can. Why, because, as mentioned in other posts, a lady’s appearance or outward projection really has nothing to do with her philosophical perspective on human equality. In similar regard can a man be macho and also be a feminist? If she is allowing herself or desiring to be objectified because of her own self awareness and self confidence and not based on a belief that she must do ‘something’ in order to adhere to societal pressures then she is actually expressing her self in a strongly confident and equal manner and thus representing an ideal of feminism.

Second question - self styling, from a purely physical appearance point, has nothing to do with gender politics, if I wear a dress am I any more or less engaged in gender politics - no, I’d just be a man in a dress. Appearance may give an assumed philosophical adherence, but that doesn’t make it real.

-Patrick Hurley
Responses to:
“Is it always demeaning or unhealthy to ‘sell your body’?”

Well, I think usually when people say that, they mean for sex, but I think that the sense of it being demeaning comes from the emphasis on marriage and monogamy -- once you remove those cultural practices, then it’s difficult to see exchanging money for sex as different that any other of the many ways to use the body for which we willingly exchange for money. Because the body gets “used up” in pretty much all the professions -- just ask any lawyer who has ulcers and needs regular massages. And blue collar work is manual labor -- still a use of the body.

And we use sex for more than the expression of love all the time. People (in marriages) cement deals with sex, comfort each other with sex, end arguments with it, etc. So the idea that sex should only occur as a communication of a very particular emotion doesn’t account for all the instances of sex that we don’t consider demeaning.

More than anything else, I think the despicable way pimps and brothels treat their workers is what is demeaning.

- John Paul Davis

We use sex for more than the expression of love all the time.

I don’t believe consensual sex is demeaning, so if the woman is an adult who has chosen to make money by selling her body that is fine. But forced prostitution is another matter entirely... Sadly many women who sell their body’s are forced to do so and don’t even get to keep the money, and that is beyond demeaning it is just evil.

- Constance Corrales

Not in theory. In practice... well, just color me skeptical.

- Cera Lawrence

No. I did not find it demeaning or unhealthy.

- Phil Grasso

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I think it’s interesting to consider this from a Marxist perspective: all work (not just sex work) involves us renting out our bodies to other people for periods of time in exchange for compensation. There is inevitably something a little demeaning about that.

With regard to sex work specifically, there are such a variety of different types of work that it’s hard to talk about it as a monolithic thing. Is it uniquely demeaning to be a nude dancer, or a porn star? What about an escort? These all entail different acts, and under different circumstances.

It’s worth noting that certain sex work is outlawed (in the U.S., at least). For sex work which is outlawed, workers may feel that they cannot seek the protection of the law when they encounter abusive or illegal behavior while working. This subjects them to a uniquely demeaning work environment, quite aside from the type of work they perform.

-Craig Stern

Getting back to the point of if the job is demeaning or unhealthy, so what if it is?

No. While any line of work can be demeaning or unhealthy (I would say that a nurse potentially has one of the most demeaning and unhealthy jobs I can think of), to sell your body does not inherently come with those classifications. There are also the semantics of what it means to “sell your body.” If you’re selling your body as a model for art/photography/film it would be pretty health-safe. If you’re talking prostitution, then you need to be far more cautious and have far better understanding of the risks involved with that line of profession to maintain a similar level of health-safety.

Getting back to the point of if the job is demeaning or unhealthy, so what if it is? There are so many jobs that a person can perform that are demeaning and unhealthy (sanitation workers, medical professionals, weapons manufacturers to name a few off the top of my head) that are fairly integral to society that most people don’t look at as such. In previous times sex workers were also considered integral to society, but perception has changed it to that of a taboo. Some would say that an actor in pornography is more demeaning than one in a Hollywood blockbuster, but that doesn’t make it true.

-Matthew Williamson
Occupying This Body Since 2009

by Ida Sefer Roche

When I was seven years old I was put on my first diet. It involved bread and yogurt for an entire summer. I was told by some family members that I was overweight and I needed to lose the weight in order for people to not make fun of me. It took me four years to enjoy yogurt again. I lost the weight they wanted me to lose, but that lesson I did not forget.

Not too long after that I started my first hate journal; yes that is right, hate journal. I wrote endlessly about which body parts I hated, how much I despised being a girl and of course the weight. I would write terrible things about my body, calling myself every name anyone had ever thrown at me. I called myself names no one had ever even called me but I had heard my friends say about someone else. I cut out magazine articles about exercising and losing weight. I cut out magazine ads that promised to “give me a more feminine shape” and promised to help me get the attention of that boy I was thinking about and so forth. The hate began to build and it was easy to keep building on that hatred.

When I was 14 I started my first “calorie journal.” I kept track of everything I ate and how much I exercised and walked and slept. By the time I was 16 I had lost about 15 pounds because of this calorie journal and the compliments just flew at me. “Thank God you lost the weight,” “You look fantastic,” “Don’t you feel so much better about yourself?” and so on and so on. I didn’t keep to the “calorie journal” so eventually I did gain weight. While I was gaining the weight back, somehow people felt the need to advise me on what I should do with my body. “Try eating less and exercising more,” “Try the smoothie diet,” “Try eating more salads.” Try, try, and try… I was trying. I was trying it all. In fact, in high school I was on the soccer team and I probably got more exercise than most of the people who were advising me, but apparently I wasn’t trying hard enough. The weight gain continued.

In college I decided diet pills would help. They didn’t. They made me anxious and dizzy. So I went back to my calorie journal and lost 10 lbs. It didn’t take a couple of months before I gained it back. Not too long after that, I decided I no longer wanted to get into a swimming suit. I came to that decision when one of my college roommates accused me of stealing her food from the fridge and claimed that my boyfriend was interested in her. I didn’t steal her food, and he wasn’t interested in her, but it was enough for her to say that to me to make me hate my body.

I trudged through college, writing endless pages of my calorie journals and my hate journals until they just became my calorie hate journals. They were endless tirades of everything I was unsatisfied with and everything I couldn’t seem to control. I then found out that I have a thyroid problem and that is what

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caused me to gain weight. I have been on medication for that ever since, but the medication did not help me lose any weight.

When I graduated from college and started my new job I gained another 10 lbs and decided I will try to obsessively exercise to lose the weight. I worked out two and a half hours, four to five days a week and nothing came off. After weeks and weeks of working out nothing had changed. I was determined to change this about myself yet my body refused to change.

That was until I figured out why nothing changed. This fat has been a constant source of pain and disappointment in my life and has managed to follow me from childhood to adulthood. I’ve spent 18 years of my life hating my body and listening to people describes my body like it is something foreign, convincing me that I’m not really “that fat person,” that I am trapped in a body that does not belong to me. Or that I would truly love myself if I lost the weight. And the worst part is that I wrote it all down, what they said, what I said, what I hated, what I ate, what I did, I wrote it all down. I reinforced it to myself over and over again.

When I was 24, I took all of my calorie and hate journals and I began to read them. It was pretty painful to read what I had written about myself. I knew that in order for my body to heal from this abuse I had caused it I had to apologize. So I stood in front of a mirror and apologized. It sounds silly but I actually apologized to my stomach, my thighs and my arms. I apologized for pinching myself to track my progress, and putting on unhealthy creams, and poisoning my body with weight loss solutions. When I was done I couldn’t stop crying. I couldn’t believe I had done this to myself. I tortured myself for more than two decades. I realized that I wasn’t the one who didn’t really love my body, other people hated my body. But in order for other people to justify hating my body they had to convince themselves that I was not a part of my body. That way they could say anything they want about what I eat, what I wear, where I sit and where I stand and that had to stop.

So I decided to occupy my body. I stopped weighing myself and keeping track of what I ate. People still make comments but I am no longer apologetic about my size or anything associated with my body. The only thing I apologize for is treating my body like it wasn’t a part of me, because it is and I have been occupying it since 2009.
Excerpts from “The Greer of Yesteryear: A Fading Landmark”

by Brandie Rae Madrid

While on the celebrity circuit, Germaine Greer’s agent asked her to write a book about why female suffrage failed. Greer’s unauthorized biographer Christine Wallace explains that while the second wave of feminism was burgeoning around her, Greer pushed through because “her book had the virtue of being magnificently accessible.” In the introduction to The Female Eunuch (1970), Germaine Greer clearly states: “This book is part of the second feminist wave.” Many seem to believe that it was indeed this book that helped ignite the second wave.

In her chapter entitled “Energy,” Greer defines what the title of her book means:

*The acts of sex are themselves forms of inquiry, as the old euphemism ‘carnal knowledge’ makes clear: it is exactly the element of quest in her sexuality which the female is taught to deny. She is not only taught to deny it in her sexual contacts, but (for in some subliminal way the connection is understood) in all her contacts, from infancy onward, so that when she becomes aware of her sex the pattern has sufficient force of inertia to prevail over new forms of desire and curiosity. This is the condition which is meant by the term female eunuch.*

During her college years, there were many references by herself and others to the term “eunuch.” This word figured strongly in her political and theoretical development.

Greer also discusses identity within the context of the words feminine/female:

*If we are to insist on the contingency of feminine characteristics as the product of conditioning, we will have to argue that the masculine-feminine polarity is actual enough, but not necessary. We will have to reject the polarity of definite terms, which are always artificial, and strive for the freedom to move within indefinite terms. On these grounds we can, indeed we must, reject femininity as meaning without libido, and therefore, incomplete, sub-human, a cultural reduction of human possibilities, and rely upon the indefinite term female, which retains the possibility of female libido.*

It is difficult to interpret this redefinition without thinking about transpeople. How does this fit in with her debacle at Cambridge where she stepped down after calling out a transwoman for being appointed a fellow at Cambridge’s all-women’s Newnham college? Can this quote even speak to that incident? Greer’s positions fluctuate easily, so it is hard to determine how to place ideas like these into a real-world situation.

In her section titled “Sex,” Greer is particularly insensitive to homosexuality. She groups it in with “criminal sex, child-violation, bondage and discipline” without explaining why or what she means “by criminal sex.” And if she believes that these forms of sexual expression, identity, or orientation are wrong, which is what she seems to imply, she does not elaborate on her reasons why. (Greer’s biographer states that in 1972, on stage at a sexual liberation forum at Sydney University, “Greer made up for some of The Female Eunuch’s shortcomings by declaring gay liberation and women’s liberation part of a continuum.”) Greer also denies the concept of female ejaculation, something to which many women would take offense, seeing as how it is a not-uncommon experience for women and one that has become a particular fetish in contemporary pornography.

*(continued on next page)*
Wallace also points out that Greer’s views on male violence against women tend to blame the victim. At the beginning of her last chapter, “Revolution,” Greer writes: 

It is true that men use the threat of physical force, usually histrionically, to silence nagging wives: but it is almost always a sham. It is actually a game of nerves, and can be turned aside fairly easily. At various stages of my life I have lived with men of known violence, two of whom had convictions for Grievous Bodily Harm, and in no case was I ever offered any physical aggression, because it was abundantly clear from my attitude that I was not impressed by it.... Much goading of men is actually the female need for the thrill of violence.

Setting aside Greer’s assumption that she understands female victimization based on non-experiences with two men, Wallace points to Greer’s own rape and asks, “Surely she did not think she had incited her rape back in Melbourne in the 1950s? Or did she not consider rape a manifestation of male violence?” I would add to that Greer’s own stature and ability to intimidate as a factor in why she escaped potential harm from the two men she refers to. It is perplexing, to say the least, how Greer can be so negative toward men and women in her book and yet retain a fan base of both sexes.

There are many other places in The Female Eunuch where Greer puts the onus for change on women. In her section entitled “Curves,” she writes that the “only way that women can opt out of such gross handling is to refuse to wear undergarments which perpetuate the fantasy of pneumatic boobs, so that men must come to terms with the varieties of the real thing.” Although it is true that both men and women must change if the sexes are to be equal, (or, as Greer prefers, women are to be liberated) we must also be wary of blaming the minority group for their own oppression.

Whether you consider The Female Eunuch revolutionary or not, it is important to consider Greer’s first book in its historical context. So much has changed between now and then, partly because of the influence of The Female Eunuch and other works and activism during the ’60s and ’70s. In her article entitled simply “Germaine Greer,” Laura Miller strongly criticizes The Female Eunuch for being “flabbergastingly categorical” and filled with “dubious research, trendy ‘revolutionary’ posturing, the patent settling of personal grudges,” and “strategic vagueness,” but also writes: “It’s all over the place, impulsive and fatally naive -- which is to say it is the quintessential product of its time.”

Later, Miller explains why the book was so appealing even with its many flaws: 

She has never been much of a thinker, but her ideas weren't what really mattered to people.... What I did take from the book was an ethic of adventure and courage, of a zest for taking on the world. Her challenge to women who called themselves emancipated -- 'consider the idea of tasting your own menstrual blood'-- didn’t really mean anything, but it was thrilling just to know that someone had traveled that far out into the territory of acceptable female behavior and planted her flag there. It created more room for the rest of us.

Whether or not readers agreed with Greer, she allowed them to feel emboldened yet somewhat normal next to Greer’s frenetic declarations. She asked a lot of her readers but many of them settled for small victories like not wearing panties and spicing up their sex lives.

In all, The Female Eunuch provides an uneven set of ideas and rants that can be quoted for various purposes much like The Bible. Its incendiary language and theories were praised and criticized, and men and women alike felt personally empowered and attacked by it.
Follow us on Twitter! @LoyolaWSGS

**Talk Sex**
*Tuesday, December 6 at 6:00 p.m.  | McCormick Lounge (Coffey Hall, Lake Shore Campus)*
Talk Sex is a public reading of anonymous, student submitted writing on sex, sexuality, and sexual culture. Stories are diverse and represent a spectrum of viewpoints and opinions. The reading is followed by a facilitated audience discussion. In its fourth or fifth year, Talk Sex has been an important forum for students and we expect this year’s to be as well. This year CARE (College Advocates for Reproductive Education) is pleased to announce partnership with Feminist Forum and Advocate (LUC’s LGBTQ advocacy group).

**Christmas Chapel Concert**
*Monday, December 5, 7:30 p.m.  | Madonna DeLa Strada Chapel*
This annual concert features music from the University Orchestra and Chorus. Performing holiday favorites, these two student ensembles delight audiences with the spirit of the Christmas season. More info: http://blogs.luc.edu/artsalive/portfolio/christmas-chapel-concert/

**Alternative Gift Fair**
*Wednesday, December 7 & Thursday, December 8, 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.  | Centennial Forum Student Union (CFSU)*
Your chance to be an ethical consumer Great holiday gifts: handicrafts, stationary, cards, apparel, pottery, coffee... and other products from around the world! The Alternative Gift Fair is a fair trade marketplace that offers ethical shopping opportunities to the Loyola community as the holidays approach. Many of the vendors in the fair are members of Chicago Fair Trade (www.chicagofairtrade.org).

**Lilli Carre, Cartoonist**
*Thursday, December 8th, 5-6:30 p.m.  | Ralph Arnold Fine Arts Annex*
Lilli Carre will project a series of short animated films she describes as "moving drawings" on the windows facing Sheridan Road. Heads explode, flowers grow, arrows are shot into ears, facial features rearrange themselves, cat-girls dance, and people blow chewing gum bubbles at each other. Lilli is a Chicago-based artist who makes comics, illustrations, and animations. Her films have been shown at festivals around the world, including the Sundance Film Festival. Last year she co-founded the Eyeworks Festival of Experimental Animation and is working on plans for the 2011 fest. She is the author of the books Tales of Woodman Pete, The Lagoon, and Nine Ways to Disappear, and has recently contributed stories to Mome, The Believer Magazine, Best American Comics 2010, and Best American Nonrequired Reading 2010.

**2012 Annual Student Art Competition**
*Deadline for submissions: December 20*
While it is often the business of students to examine and admire the creative output of professional artists, the tables are turned in the annual student show. The competition is open to all Loyola students, regardless of major or experience, and any of these art mediums is acceptable: drawing, painting, photography, digital art, ceramics, sculpture, and any combination thereof. All entries must be original works of the student and must have been completed in the last year. Each student may submit up to 3 works to the competition. Submit work between December 12-December 20 from 8:30 – 5 PM to the DFPA office on the 12th floor of Mundelein. Entries will be displayed in the Ralph Arnold Fine Arts Annex and judged by Mary Lou Zelazny, Chicago-based artist and professor at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Have an event or opportunity that the Loyola WSGS community would be interested in? Send it our way! E-mail the details to Kathryn Berg at kberg3@luc.edu
**LOCAL EVENTS**

**An Insights Discussion with Rabbi Shoshanah Conover**

**Thursday, December 8 at 6:30 p.m. | Temple Sholom in Chicago (3480 North Lake Shore Drive)**

Many forms of sexual exploitation are pervasive in our culture--sexual assault, prostitution, pornography. This is very disturbing and means that every single person can do more to fight the root causes of sexual exploitation. We are partnering with the Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation to learn from a panel of experts and a survivor on how our community can support this worthwhile cause. If you would like to attend, please RSVP to Kevin Gladish at 773.425.1536 or Kevin@sholomchicago.org

**2nd Annual Stand Up for Girls Conference**

**Thursday, December 8th | Chicago Marriott Downtown, 540 N. Michigan Ave.**

Girls are in trouble. Alarming rates of obesity and other related health and social risks are putting girls, especially girls of color and those growing up in an urban environment, in danger. What factors contribute to this epidemic? How are girls uniquely and disproportionately affected? And what can be done to reverse the crisis before it's too late? Learn from experts in the field through roundtable discussions, networking with youth-serving organizations, and attend a resource fair. Register online at girlsinthegame.org/standupforgirls. Your $10 registration fee will include breakfast and networking.

**Support Hyatt Hotel Housekeepers in a Boycott**

**December 15, 3:00 p.m.**

The Hyatt Corporation has singled itself out as the worst employer in the hotel industry. Hotel housekeepers have been abused with dangerous workloads without the safety and assurance of contracts or health insurance. Rather than addressing these injustices, the Hyatt has shifted away from taking care of its own employees all together by outsourcing jobs to minimum wage temporary workers. Join these hotel workers along with boycotting community members for an action on December 15th at 3:00 pm at a location to be determined to make our voices heard loud and clear. For more information please read about the Hotel Workers Rising Campaign. To get involved with the organizing around this campaign you can contact Unite Here, the hotel workers union working tirelessly to represent these workers.

**CROSSED (How Going South Flipped Our Script)**

**Running through December 18th | Viaduct Theatre, 3111 N. Western Ave**

Teatro Luna, Chicago's all-Latina Theatre Company, presents its eighth original play. CROSSED seeks to explode (yes, explode!) stereotype and poetically navigate what it means to be an immigrant in the United States in an era some have ironically dubbed “post-racial.” Set in a series of unknown terminals, join seven diverse performers as they share both their own autobiographical stories, as well as accounts collected from interviews, news reports, and the Lunáticas own experiences while traveling South in spring 2011—ranging from topics like: one Latina’s reaction to Congresswoman Gifford’s shooting, to the painful mystery of a cousin who went missing on the same day as 400 others in Mexico, to burlesque in an Airport security checkpoint set to the tune of La Cucaracha. For more information or to purchase tickets visit http://bit.ly/buynxccrossedbyteatroluna

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CALLS FOR PAPERS

CFP: Women’s Studies Area of the Popular Culture Association and American Culture Association Joint Conference
Deadline for Proposals: December 15

The Popular Culture Association and American Culture Association invites submissions for individual papers, and for complete panels, for its Women’s Studies area for its forthcoming national conference, to be held in Boston between April 11-14, 2012. We welcome papers and panels on any facet of popular culture relating to the study of women and gender, including, not by no means limited to:

- Women’s participation in, and creation of, literary works and print culture
- Women’s involvement as consumers and producers of film and television culture, and representations of women within television and film
- Women as the subjects of, audiences for, and responders to advertising
- Women’s engagement with popular music, as artists, consumers, and fans
- Women’s engagement with social media and their work as bloggers and cultural critics

For more information on the PCA-ACA and our national conference, please see http://www.pcaaca.org/conference/national.php
Please send all queries and submissions to Holly Kent, at hkent3@uis.edu.

CONFERENCES

Transforming Gender Orders: Intersections of Care, Family and Migration
Registration closing date: January 9, 2012

January 18th – 20th 2012 | Goethe-University Frankfurt/Main, Germany

This conference takes up the controversies about the transformation of gender relations in the course of globalization processes and strives for a discussion from new perspectives. Drawing on the work of R. Connell gender orders refer to historically constructed patterns of power relations between men and women (not only as subjects, but also in the social arrangements of masculinity and femininity) which are mediated and institutionalized via distinctions and relations. We seek to analyze both the normative and symbolic aspects of these relations and the social and cultural codings and the spaces of action of relations between the genders and within one of the gender groups. Register via e-mail or online: transforminggenderorders@gmail.com
Further information and registration details: http://www.cgc.uni-frankfurt.de/genderorders/
Internal Fellowships to Conduct Research in Tunisia
Call for Applications
Application Deadline: December 15, 2011
Award Amount: 3 awards ($10,435 each)
Award Period: May/June 2012 (total of 35 days)
Full-time Loyola University Chicago faculty at the Lake Shore, Medical Center, and Water Tower campuses are invited to apply for internal fellowships ($10,435) to conduct research in Tunisia during May-June 2012 as part of a $250,000 Loyola grant project funded by the U.S. State Department in coordination with the U.S. Embassy in Tunis and three Tunisian Universities. Three fellowships are available for May-June 2012. All expenses for each Loyola scholar are funded by the fellowship, including up to $1,850 for roundtrip transportation (Chicago-Tunis) and $7,385 in per diem to cover lodging, food, and all other minor expenses during the five-week (35 day) period of the research stay. The fellowship also provides important in-country support, including directly paying $200 to the Centre d’Études Maghrébines à Tunis (CEMAT – Center for Maghreb Studies in Tunis) for a research affiliation, $500 to Carthage Academic Services to provide basic in-country support (e.g., aid in finding a hotel or apartment), and $500 to an English-speaking Tunisian graduate research assistant selected by the host institution to aid in day-to-day requests/activities during the five-week period of the grant. For further details visit http://www.luc.edu/oip/TunisiaGrant.shtml. If you have any questions, please contact Peter J. Schraeder (pschrae@luc.edu).

Spanish Language Immersion: Women and Social Change in Mexico
January 7 - January 20
At CETLALIC, the most progressive Spanish immersion school in Mexico, you will learn Spanish, study social justice issues, and live with a local family. Learn about Mexican culture, politics, and economics through the lens of women’s experiences and struggles for social justice. Study how women from various backgrounds (I.e. Indigenous, students, workers) have been affected by the neoliberal model of globalization and the kinds of mobilizations they have initiated or participated in. Establish and strengthen links between women of different countries (whose lives in an increasingly globalized world are more interrelated than ever) by sharing our respective struggles for justice and equality. Now accepting applications at http://www.cetlalic.org.mx/social_change_programs_mexico/women_in_mexico.htm

Join Team Democracy and Earn $300
Since the 2008 Primary Elections, Loyola University Chicago has partnered with the Cook County Clerk's Office to recruit civic minded Loyola students to serve as Equipment Managers on Election Day. So far, over 700 students have participated in the initiative and each year student involvement continues to grow. If you are a civic minded student who wants to get involved in your community, then this may be a great opportunity for you. The Equipment Manager is responsible for setting up and maintaining the voting equipment on Election Day, and then transmitting the results when the polls close. For their services, new Equipment Managers receive $300, while returning Equipment Managers receive $350. For more information or to sign-up contact: Elvis Veizi, Student Associate and Election Manager Program Coordinator, Phone: 1-773-508-7450, equipmentmanager@luc.edu

Feminist Boot Camp
New York City, January 4-11, 2012
Feminist Boot Camp is an intensive week-long program designed for university students and anyone interested in meeting with progressive leaders and national feminist organizations. FBC emphasizes career development and will include opportunities to network with people in the forefront of feminist activism. A transformative week of feminist immersion that can’t be found anywhere else. Your guides will be seasoned activists and Soapbox co-founders Amy Richards and Jennifer Baumgardner, authors of Manifesta: Young Women, Feminism and the Future and Grassroots: A Field Guide for Feminist Activism. You can expect to participate in path-breaking progressive campaigns launched from NYC, tackle fundraising and other practical but necessary skills for your cause, and explore dynamic issues like sexual rights, the arts, media, philanthropy, and practical skills for getting a job or internship. For more information visit http://www.soapboxinc.com/feminist-boot-camps-landing/
CAREERS

Assistant Professor, Women's Studies, Hobart and William Smith
The Women's Studies Program of Hobart and William Smith Colleges invites applications for a tenure-track Assistant Professor beginning July 1, 2012. We seek candidates with expertise in feminism and health who will connect Women's Studies to the natural sciences and/or public policy or other fields. Ph.D. preferred, ABD considered. The teaching load will be five courses per year; candidates are expected to contribute to the teaching of core courses in the program (e.g., Introduction to Women’s Studies; Feminist Theory; Feminist Research) in addition to courses in an area of specialty and courses in the Colleges’ general curriculum. Candidates with a commitment to a diverse student population are especially encouraged to apply. Information on Women’s Studies can be found at: http://www.hws.edu/academics/ws/
Candidates should submit a letter of application, writing sample, CV, and arrange for three letters of recommendation to be addressed to Betty M. Bayer, Chair, Women's Studies, c/o Tina Smaldone, Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Geneva, NY 14456; email smaldone@hws.edu.

INTERNSHIPS

Target New Transitions (TNT)
Target New Transitions is a paid outreach program working with at-risk high school first-year students. Join our team of Loyola academic coaches who offer academic support and mentoring to students in high-need Chicago Public Schools on Saturday mornings. For more information contact Ryan: 773/508-8042 or e-mail: rdaily1@luc.edu

LIFT Chicago Internship Positions
All intern positions will include direct client service. All positions must dedicate approximately 10-15 hours a week, depending on course requirements, for the entire semester, and attend mandatory volunteer meetings every other Sunday evening on Loyola University’s Lake Shore campus. All internships will begin with an initial volunteer training at the start of their term on. Internships will begin no later than January 30th, but an earlier start date will be accommodated and may be necessary. For More Info: chicago@liftcommunities.org or mforrest@liftcommunities.org

Have an event or opportunity that the Loyola WSGS community would be interested in? Send it our way! E-mail the details to Kathryn Berg at kberg3@luc.edu

Stay tuned for new Volunteer Opportunities in future Digests!*
* If you know of a volunteer opportunity for students, staff, and the community, contact kberg@luc.edu
We want you to Submit!
Digest Contributor Guidelines

Principles

i) Feminist Consciousness:
   (a) recognizes all voices and experiences as important, and not in a hierarchical form.
   (b) takes responsibility for the self and does not assume false objectivity.
   (c) is not absolutist or detached, but rather, is more inclusive and sensitive to others.

ii) Accessibility:
   (a) means utilizing accessible language, theory, knowledge, and structure in your writing.
   (b) maintains a connection with your diverse audience by not using unfamiliar/obscure words, overly long sentences, or abstraction.
   (c) does not assume a specific audience, for example, white 20-year-old college students.

iii) Jesuit Social Justice Education & Effort:
   (a) promotes justice in openhanded and generous ways to ensure freedom of inquiry, the pursuit of truth and care for others.
   (b) is made possible through value-based leadership that ensures a consistent focus on personal integrity, ethical behavior, and the appropriate balance between justice and fairness.
   (c) focuses on global awareness by demonstrating an understanding that the world’s people and societies are interrelated and interdependent.

Expectations and Specifics

• You may request to identify yourself by name, alias, or as “anonymous” for publication in the digest. For reasons of accountability, the staff must know who you are, first and last name plus email address.

• We promote accountability of our contributors, and prefer your real name and your preferred title (i.e., Maruka Hernandez, CTA Operations Director, 34 years old, mother of 4; or J. Curtis Main, Loyola graduate student in WSGS, white, 27 years old), but understand, in terms of safety, privacy, and controversy, if you desire limitations. We are happy to publish imagery of you along with your submission, at our discretion.

• We gladly accept submission of varying length- from a quick comment to several pages. Comments may be reserved for a special “feedback” section. In order to process and include a submission for a particular issue, please send your submission by the Friday before the publication comes out, which is every Monday.

• Please include a short statement of context when submitting imagery, audio, and video.

• We appreciate various styles of scholarship; the best work reveals thoughtfulness, insight, and fresh perspectives.

• Such submissions should be clear, concise, and impactful. We aim to be socially conscious and inclusive of various cultures, identities, opinions, and lifestyles.

• As a product of the support and resources of Loyola University and its Women Studies and Gender Studies department, all contributors must be respectful of the origin of the magazine; this can be accomplished in part by ensuring that each article is part of an open discourse rather than an exclusive manifesto.

• All articles must have some clear connection to the mission of the magazine. It may be helpful to provide a sentence or two describing how your article fits into the magazine as a whole.

• The writing must be the original work of the author and may be personal, theoretical, or a combination of the two. When quoting or using the ideas of others, it must be properly quoted and annotated. Please fact-check your work and double-check any quotes, allusions and references. When referencing members of Loyola and the surrounding community, an effort should be made to allow each person to review the section of the article that involves them to allow for fairness and accuracy.

• Gratuitous use of expletives and other inflammatory or degrading words and imagery may be censored if it does not fit with the overall message of the article or magazine. We do not wish to edit content, but if we feel we must insist on changes other than fixing typos and grammar, we will do so with the intent that it does not compromise the author’s original message. If no compromise can be made, the editor reserves the right not to publish an article.

• All articles are assumed to be the opinion of the contributor and not necessarily a reflection of the views of Loyola University and the WSGS program.

We very much look forward to your submissions and your contribution to our overall mission. Please send your submissions to: bmadrid@luc.edu