



**WOMEN'S
ACTION
ALLIANCE
CANBERRA
(WAAC)**

Let's get it done.

#notallmen

#yesallwomen

Regular framing questions

- How does this affect us as a woman, and as women?
- How is this an expression of patriarchy?
- How does this dehumanise women?
- How does this relate to capitalism and consumption?
- How do patriarchy, pornography, and prostitution intersect in this?
- What is getting in the way of our fighting this?

The 3 Ps

1. Patriarchy
2. Pornography
3. Prostitution

Oppression and dehumanisation

Oppression

- People are **dehumanised** and **oppressed** by **exploitation, injustice, violence**



Oppression

- To see or treat others as an **object** of knowledge (eg, 'I **know you are a trouble-maker**') and **not a source** of it ('**Why do I label you so?**'), is an **oppressive act**

Oppression

- It is oppressive because it **dehumanises** them ...
- It does not recognise their **inherent humanity**

Oppression

- I **know** everything, you know nothing
- I **think**, you are **thought about**
- I **talk**, you **listen**
- I **discipline**, you are disciplined
- I **choose** and **enforce**, you **comply**
- I **act**, you have the **illusion of acting**
- I **choose**, you **adapt**
- I am the **subject**, you are the **object**

Oppression

- Men **know** everything, women know nothing
- Men **think**, women are **thought about**
- Men **talk**, women **listen**
- Men **discipline**, women are disciplined
- Men **choose** and **enforce**, women **comply**
- Men **act**, women have the **illusion of acting**
- Men **choose**, women **adapt**
- Men are the **subject**, women are the **object**

Oppression

- All of this is the very **antithesis** of being human
- We/men force others/women to become '**spectators**' not '**co-creators**'

Subtle forms of dehumanisation

1. Domestication
2. False generosity

1. Domestication

- The problem with wanting to ‘domesticate’ people is that it **pre-establishes a future** for them
- And once the future is pre-established, **people get locked in** -- they **cannot move** and **cannot be learnt from**

2. False generosity

- A second subtle form of oppression comes in “false generosity”...
- A **‘softening of power’** that is really only about **keeping the oppressed down**, keeping them/women ‘happy’ or **content with their lot** in life.

1. Domestication

- Domestication is a form of oppression
- It’s about making people (women) **do things your way** because it suits you (patriarchy) best ...
- About wanting to **change the consciousness of the oppressed** (to suit me/n), **not the situation** (Ad Standards, Community Panel, et al.)



Domestication & false generosity

- Once the oppressed (women) have **‘internalised’ the consciousness of the oppressor** (through techniques of false generosity) they become **domesticated**
- (Is this what Ad Standards have done to the Community Panel?)

Despotism

Despotism

- The exercise of **absolute power**

Despotism

- Despotism I: **Lack of common interests**
- Despotism II: **Separation**

Despotism I: No common interests

- Despotic** societies promote an **interplay between dread and hope**
- Dread of **consequences** -- “avoiding **pain**”
- Hope of **reward** -- “attaining **pleasure**”
- e.g., situations of domestic abuse, esp. coercive control

Despotism I: No common interests

- People/women do not “operate on their own account” but **only in response** to dread and hope -> **no common interests**
- Stimulation-response** situation



Despotism I: No common interests

- It's about **looking out for 'number one'**
- Thus, there are **no common interests**, no common **values**, no **"free play back and forth"**
- In such a form of communication **we "educate some into masters, others into slaves"**
- (Ad Standards, Community Panel, et al.)



Despotism I: No common interests

- Dewey says that we (women) **become alienated from others** when we don't have a **personal interest** in others (women) and their (women's) success

Despotism I: No common interests

- **Lack of diversity** means **lack of novelty** and **lack of challenge** to thought
- This prevents **"the interplay of experiences"**
- It **prevents** full and human **communication**
- This is **emblematic** of **Neo-liberalism**



Jess

January 24, 2019 at 9:10 pm

Hot take: women can wear lingerie if they want to. Your policing of women's sexuality is more of a problem than this ad will ever be.

★ Like

↩ Reply



Women's Action Alliance Canberra

January 29, 2019 at 11:08 am

Hi, Jess, thanks for your comment. Of course, it's a truism that women can wear lingerie if they want to, so you get no argument from us on that.

We hope that upon a careful reading of the post it will become clear that it is not about our policing women's sexuality, but about how women's sexuality is policed by a neoliberal capitalism made possible – and enforced in ways described in the post – by a patriarchal social system. It is this that polices women's sexuality in the exceedingly narrow ways described in the brief study above. What would women's sexuality look like freed from such literal (as laid out in the post) and structural confinements? It seems that many women do not know, which rather goes to prove Germaine Greer's female enunch thesis.

We further invite you to critique the argument based on the merits of the sociological and semiotic analyses advanced in the post.

Despotism I: No common interests

- A bit like Marx's concept of the **alienation of labour** ... innit.

Despotism II: Separation

- This occurs when **one group (or person) shuts out another** in order to **serve their own interests**
- Its main purpose is to **protect oneself** and one's **interests, not to “reorganise and progress through wider relationships”**
- It's **anti-progressive**
- Sounds like ... **neo-liberalism!**

Despotism II: Separation

- Patriarchal bargaining
- Is this what the Ad Standards CP member is doing?
- If so, Does she know? Would she see her self as neo-liberal?

Neo-liberalism

- There is **no society**, only **individuals**

Despotism II: Separation

- This leads to **selfish ideals** and **isolation**
- The problem? **Contact with others** would necessitate some kind of **reconstruction, reconstitution, readjustment** or **shift of consciousness** of either the group or the self -- not always welcome!

Neo-liberalism

Neo-liberalism

- 1) It regards the **individual** as an **autonomous agent**, primarily motivated by **self-interest**
- 2) It tells us the unregulated **free-market** economy **alleviates** social **inequalities**
- 3) It describes **personal freedom** in terms of the individual's ability to **“choose”** in a marketplace of choices

Neo-/liberal feminism

- **Lacks** an **analysis**
- **No acknowledgement** of **structures** and **systems** and how they frame people's **material realities**
- No sense of **collective interests** (for good or for ill)

Gail Dines, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D_Hyi5gpWOk&t=594s

Neo-/liberal feminism

- **Divides** women into **aspirational** and **non-aspirational**, with **different roles** and **expectations** for the two groups

Rachel Asproth, <https://www.cbeinternational.org/blogs/4-ways-history-rigged-against-women>

Neo-/liberal feminism

- A **self-help program** for **upper-middle-class** women
- Focuses on '**balance**' between **family** and **career**
- Promotes '**cost-benefit**' analysis of **personal fulfilment** (which relies on **underpaid** workers)

Ruth O'Brien, forward to Catherine Rottenberg, *The Rise of Neo-Liberal Feminism* (2018)

Social conditions

- We need to ask,
 - ◆ What are the **social conditions**, the **objective realities** of people's lives, that **give rise** to **women's oppression**?

Why I am not a feminist

Feminism is

- A narcissistic reflexive thought process: I define myself as feminist and so everything I do is a feminist act, no matter how banal or regressive —i.e., no matter what I do, I am a hero.
- A fight to allow women to participate equally in the oppression of the powerless and the poor.
- A belief that disagreement or conflict is abuse.

Jessa Crispin, *Why I am not a Feminist* (2017)

Why I am not a feminist

- A protective system utilizing trigger warnings, politically correct language, mob rule, and strawmen arguments to allow a person never to feel uncomfortable or challenged.
- An attack dog posing as a kitten with a droplet of fresh milk on her nose.

Jessa Crispin, *Why I am not a Feminist* (2017)

Why I am not a feminist

- A decade-long conversation about which television show is a good television show and which television show is a bad television show.
- A bland reworked brand of soda, focus group tested for universal palatability and inoffensiveness, scientifically proven to leach calcium from your bones, with an enormous marketing budget; tagline: “Go ahead, be a monster. You deserve it.”

Jessa Crispin, *Why I am not a Feminist* (2017)

Why I am not a feminist

- Aspiration: Those below you may be pitiable, but not really your concern. Those above you are modes of behavior for attaining the best life. The best life is defined as a life of wealth, comfort, and firm buttocks.
- All about you.

Jessa Crispin, *Why I am not a Feminist* (2017)

Transformation

Transformative action

- Once a person **‘knows’ reality better**, they can **transform** it
- (This comes through **critical consciousness**)

Creating new situations

- Simply **acknowledging** oppressive behaviours is not enough -- we need to **“enter into the situation”** of others in order to **fully understand** them and to **transform** the **situation** (31)
- We have to **create new situations** through “transforming action” in pursuit of a “fuller humanity”

“This individual is not afraid to confront, to listen, to see the world unveiled. This person is not afraid to meet the people or to enter into dialogue with them

— Paolo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Preface

Transformative action

- But there is a way out ... through **transformative action**

Transformation

- The oppressed must take part in their own liberation -- **oppressors cannot 'liberate' others** (ie, the oppressed) ... only themselves.



LET'S
GET
IT
DONE