

# SPARKS FROM THE FLAME



## RADICAL FEMINIST GREETINGS & MESSAGES FOR MICHFEST 2014



**FOR WOMYN AND BY WOMYN**

# INTRODUCTION

Thank you for picking up this grassroots publication, printed on a shoe-string budget. It is filled with greetings and messages for MichFest participants from women who are part of feminist discussion and action groups online and in real life from around the world.

The call-out for this zine was launched on July 14th 2014 on facebook, twitter, tumblr and through personal appeals to women I hoped would take the opportunity to answer the following questions:

What is radical feminism? Where is it going and/or where should it go? and Why and how should women join the movement?

I reached out to a variety of women I know who are involved in women's liberation studies and actions in their daily lives in hopes of capturing feminist words that inform and inspire.

In this time of increasingly alarming social and ecological crises, we need to come together to help each other out and to heal. Breaking social isolation was a big motivator in putting this project together.

It has been a hard last two years for me. The institutions that used to put women and women's needs first, such as the Madison chapter of the National Organization for Women (NOW) and other "feminist" organizations in Madison, are no longer doing so. Instead they are advocating for "trans-inclusive" sentiment and policies that exclude women from the very organizations that used to be for us.

In addition, two years ago, I received a "wake-up call" when I attempted to do a workshop on anarcha-feminism for the Twin Cities Anarchist Book Fair and was threatened with violence publicly on their facebook event page. This single event has led to increased marginalization by the "radical" male-left community in the Midwest and a feeling of hopelessness in my soul.

I thought radical activists were in favor of dismantling patriarchy and pro-woman, but I was sorely mistaken.

In this climate of accusations of "transphobia" taking over our precious few women's safe spaces, activist organizations and advocacy groups, what is to become of women's rights and needs in the coming months, years and decades?

It is up to us to organize to take back our institutions and our rightful place as leaders, visionaries and dedicated followers in our communities. There are and will be plenty of women (and of course, men) who do not put women first in their advocacy work, but instead, will fall for the lies and false promises of gender liberation for “all women” – including men who claim to be women. The transactivist movement is like an invasion of the body snatchers, only worse, because not only does it harm our ability to organize authentic safe spaces for women, but it is harmful to those who practice transgenderism too. Synthetic hormones, puberty inhibitors and genital mutilation are not methods of human liberation and health. We need to speak out against this practice and inform parents of the harms their children will be facing if they “transition.”

We must act precisely and with knowledge of the tools women have used to separate ourselves from male rule. We must re-activate and support women’s organizations, including rape crisis centers and abortion clinics – because the support women need is dissipating and our needs are real.

The personal pain that I have felt as a woman, privileged to have her own home and loving cat, has been enough to cause suicidal and self-hating thoughts and behaviors in ME – Misogyny is a lived reality in my kitchen, bathroom, bedroom and life. Women have our very Selves to lose -- the Selves we are denied because we are trained in the patriarchy, to always put others’ needs first and to call women who pay attention to their needs “selfish”, “ego-driven” and “taking up too much space.” I capitalize the word “Selves” to emphasize our right to claim our own lives as worthy of attention, sisterhood and love.

I hope these writings, meant for the womyn of MichFest 2014 (and beyond), inspire us to move forward in our goals of maintaining women’s spaces and creating more of them as we face the challenges of these dark times. If nothing else, I hope that it reveals to you that you are not alone in your struggles as a female dealing with the personal and political harms of misogyny.

~ Thistle Pettersen  
Editor and Contributor  
thistle@riseup.net

To hear my music online: <http://www.thistlespace.org>

*"I feel that man-hating is an honorable  
and viable political act, that the oppressed  
have a right to class-hatred against  
the class that is oppressing them."  
- Robin Morgan*



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## **6 – GREETINGS, FESTIE READER!**

by Heath Atom Russell, Member of WoLF, Women's Liberation Front,  
and regular writer at [www.nymeses.blogspot.com](http://www.nymeses.blogspot.com)

## **9 – MY RADICAL FEMINISM IN A NUTSHELL**

by Jai Kalidasi, a feminist who writes powerfully online  
in her comments and posts on facebook.

## **10 – RADICAL FEMINISM**

by Bev Jo, One of the moderators of "Radical Feminist Coffee House"  
a facebook discussion/support group online and writer at  
<http://bevjoradicallesbian.wordpress.com/>

## **14 – POEMS**

by Ali Butt-kicker Bee, a feminist singer/songwriter and poet.  
Contact Ali at [moonsinger0@yahoo.com](mailto:moonsinger0@yahoo.com)

## **17 – IF YOU ARE FEMALE**

by Terre Spencer - <http://terrespencer.wordpress.com/>

## **19 – WHAT IS RADICAL FEMINISM?**

by Jitana Rose, Moderator for Feminism!  
and Mothers Against Patriarchy on Facebook.

## **23 – ROBBIE**

by Miep Rowan O'Brian. You can find Miep on Facebook.

## **25 – MALESPEAK**

### **WITH RADICAL FEMINIST TRANSLATIONS**

By Elaine Charkowski - [utopiabold@gmail.com](mailto:utopiabold@gmail.com)

## **30 – RADICAL FEMINIST STATEMENT**

Prepared by Thistle Pettersen for WBW MichFest-Goers  
and Women Everywhere in 2014.

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## GREETINGS FROM HEATH ATOM RUSSELL

Greetings, Festie reader! I want to take the opportunity to say that I hope you are having an unforgettable and positive experience so far at Michfest 2014! While I wish I could be there in person to celebrate alongside all of you, I cannot, so instead I only have my words as a gift for you.

My name is Heath Atom Russell. I'm a 25 year old radical lesbian feminist in Northern California. I am currently involved with a number of radical feminist projects, conferences, workshops, public speaking, and writing.

I wasn't always this way, though! No, for a while, (about 6 years, roughly), I thought I was a man. I socially, medically, and legally attempted transitioning away from my female self, and for the longest time, I thought I had actually lost myself completely. I'm happy to report that I have found myself again, and I didn't even need Jesus (nope, already had a conservative Christian upbringing! I cannot do that again). My savior this time around was radical feminism, which I couldn't have discovered at a better time in my life, because that was when I had made the life-changing decision to detransition and acknowledge my reality as female once again.

Transition and detransition were not easy choices for me to make by a long shot. Each step in the journey was tumultuous, calculated, and deliberate, but overall I felt at the time I was making the best decisions for myself.

Last year, I was interviewed by Prof. Sheila Jeffreys as a case study for her newest book *Gender Hurts: A Feminist Analysis of the Politics of Transgenderism*, which was released earlier this year. In it, Jeffreys lists me as being part of the survivors' movement, of people who are recovering physically and mentally from being diagnosed with gender dysphoria.

So, what is radical feminism and why does this all matter? You might have heard radical feminists face accusations of being "transphobic" or being "TERFs" (trans-exclusionary radical feminists). I could just as easily make the argument that queer activists are lesbophobic and Lesbian-Infiltrating Male-Pleasers, or LIMP, which seems a fitting acronym. However, it's not in my interest to name-call, as amusing as I might find it sometimes. I know that words hurt, but I'm getting more than a little frustrated at being called a TERF all the time.

In short, radical feminism is an ideological perspective which posits that patriarchy is the root of female oppression. Women can face multiple oppressions relating (but not limited) to race, sexuality, ability, age, class, or other factors, but at the end of the day, all females everywhere are oppressed on the basis of sex.

As human beings, we are a sexually dimorphic species. That means we have two sexes, which are female or male. Persons with intersex conditions also exist and are routinely used by trans activists in order to somehow validate transsexualism. Trans activists argue that because some people are born with conditions which are not contained within the sexually dimorphic model, that somehow negates the existence of two main biological sexes. But, to offer another example, just because some people are born without two legs does not negate the fact that human beings are generally born with two legs. These are just biological facts. The males are not any more superior biologically to the females, or vice versa, neither are intersex people.

Patriarchy is a system of domination which distinguishes males at the top of the hierarchy, and females and intersex people at the bottom. Patriarchy is manifested and maintained in various social institutions, including everything from the law to finance, from science to religion. Men own and control the land, and they fight tooth and nail every day to blast the message that they own and control all women's bodies and spaces as well.

Radical feminism understands the importance of female bodily autonomy in a world free from male violence. It seeks to destroy the gender caste system as opposed to adopting a multitude of "gender identities" as the answer. Radical feminism seeks to dismantle the material conditions which cause female oppression, as opposed to pretending that reality does not exist.

Radical feminism was also at the forefront of the second wave feminist movement of the 60s and 70s. When our detractors claim that radical feminism is no longer relevant, or it is archaic, they're sorely mistaken. If anything, the anti-feminist backlash in the decades that followed and into the present day makes radical feminism more of a dire necessity than ever before.

In fact, here are some signs you might be a radical feminist! Which includes such points as the following:

-Do you think that having words for reproductive classes of humans does NOT mean that A) humans in either class MUST fulfill their potential reproductive role and B) ALL they can do is fulfill their potential reproductive role?

-Do you think that potential reproductive role, while an important part of our lived reality as embodied mammals, does NOT determine human personality, and thus should NOT determine social role or status?

-Do you think that **male** violence against other, gender non-conforming males is both A) unacceptable and B) the responsibility **of those violent men** and C) not the responsibility of women?

Source: <http://secretlyradical.blogspot.com/2014/07/10-signs-you-might-be-terf.html>

If women are interested in getting involved with the radical feminist movement, I recommend the Women's Liberation Front (WoLF). You can become a member of WoLF, donate to us, start your own local WoLF pack, or simply volunteer. We need women who are organized and motivated against male supremacy, and we look forward to working with you! Check out our new website, which is [www.womensliberationfront.org](http://www.womensliberationfront.org)



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# MY RADICAL FEMINISM, IN A NUTSHELL

by Jai Kalidasi – Find her on facebook!



It is for the liberation of all womyn--and all of life--from the social, political, economic, interpersonal, environmental, etc, control by patriarchy. Patriarchy, which is perpetual war. Patriarchy, which Mary Daly calls a necrophilic system, that destroys love and life in its reduction of life to domination and submission, subject-object relations, and at its root is men's violent domination of womyn and our children.

My radical feminism does not seek 'equality' with men, within a worldwide system built by and for men, that reduces womyn to the 'sex class' (less-than-human, made for men's sexual, breeding and nurturing needs) and reduces all of life to mere dead things to exploit for the benefit of the few. Equality is foreclosed within such a system, since it is reliant upon the control of the many by the few, through violating and violent means.

My radical feminism seeks nothing less than to dismantle patriarchy, and create justice for all of life. It demands our recognition that male violence is the worst problem in the world, from which all of our own and Earth's severe problems originate; it fully acknowledges that racism, classism, heterosexism, ableism and all forms of oppression arise from patriarchy's foundation. It recognizes that until womyn are recognized as fully human and accorded our full voice and participation in life--and until we no longer live in fear of rape culture and violence against ourselves and Earth--nothing will change. My radical feminism further acknowledges that humans are not separate from life with ownership of Earth and the right to exert violence in extraction of resources from womyn, from Earth and all upon it. It demands that we recognize that instead, we belong to Earth as but one part of its intimately interconnected living systems that must be honored for us or any life to thrive.

My radical feminism is about understanding that the roots of womyn's oppression and the oppression of all others in this life arise from patriarchy, and it demands that we work to dismantle that violent, violating, necrophilic system which presently rules Earth. It demands that we work to create human societies that fully honor womyn, children, as well as all of Earth reality, and which enact justice for all humans and all of life.

## **RADICAL FEMINISM**

By Bev Jo



Claiming to be Radical is trendy, which is why many “radicals” are actually liberal or even reformist or reactionary. Yet our over forty years of Radical Feminism, and especially Radical Lesbian Feminism, is visible in writing from the early Seventies and decades later.

I was there. I saw the battles between the reactionaries who wanted a segregated feminism where they could get a better deal from their men and from patriarchy. I saw when most of those women left to return to patriarchy. I saw the trans lies, porn, academia, genderqueer propaganda, sado-masochism, and heterosexism of the “sexologists” (who pretended to be Lesbians, while defining us out of existence) come into our community. I saw our movement and culture betrayed and sold out.

Liberal feminism is about wanting to improve patriarchy, but not to go deeply into how bad things really are, and, ultimately, not wanting to change. This is a more comfortable position to be in than radical because you can feel part of the mainstream, keeping your privilege, while also feeling superior.

Seventies Radical Feminism was about supporting women to feel strong and proud in rejecting patriarchy. Later diluted liberal feminism patronizes women as too weak and damaged to be given credit for the choices that we make and keeps women infantilised. This is partly why the feminist move-

ment seems to have lost much of its sense of excitement and pride, as well as hope for the future.

Both reformists and liberals want a segregated movement where more oppressed women are banned or are condemned to “knowing their place,” similarly to how the male left treats women.

Liberals have been very comfortable in feeling superior and try to stop women from talking back, so they project and repeat patronizing, insulting and oppressive male tactics to censor and silence. Some actually claim that **they** are the Radical Feminists, which is reminiscent of trans cult claiming that they are more women than real women.

Reformist and liberal feminism supports the status quo, saying that everything will be just fine if somehow men would change, usually requiring women to continue devoting their lives to boys and men, ignoring how dangerously unchangeable males are. Radical Feminists know that facing the truth is the only way to end male violence and is ultimately very freeing.

Radical Feminism is liberal feminism taken to its logical extreme, when women refuse patriarchal censors on our minds and ignore fear of retribution. Radical goes beyond all the lies, recognizing that patriarchy is built on deception. When the lies are exposed, then patriarchal control of girls’ and women’s minds unravels.

My definition of Radical Feminism (after being a Radical Feminist since 1970, writing *Dykes and Gorgons* in 1973, and our book, *Dykes-Loving-Dykes* in 1990:

1. Radical Feminism means recognizing that patriarchy is dominating the world, and this war against girls, women and the earth herself is built on female-hating, rape, and gynocide. (The propaganda/lie is that it has always been this way and that females belong to males, but male supremacist rule has not always existed, though we and the earth are running out of time.) Radical Feminism is about eliminating patriarchy. Wanting only to get a better deal from patriarchy is not Radical Feminism.

2. Radical Feminists do not proselytize for men (including men claiming to be women or Lesbians), religions, heterosexuality or bisexuality, sado-masochism, porn, etc. Radical Feminists do not make excuses for males in their oppression of females, or believe that males can be feminists or allow them

into feminist groups. (Men who want to support us can organize elsewhere, but their history is not good in terms of being sincere or trustworthy.)

Radical Feminists do not believe that males are raping and murdering because they were somehow “socialized” that way (which leads once again to women devoting even more time to change males.) There are clear biological, mental, and emotional differences between females and males. This doesn’t mean that males should not be held accountable for the crimes they commit, but rather that we be aware of how dangerous they are.

3. Radical Feminists NEVER agree to the female-hating trans cult con that men could be women or Lesbians. (We also do not accept “trans-paraplegic” able-bodied men who demand to be accepted as paraplegic Lesbians.) This includes not supporting these men appropriating our identity by calling them “transfolk” or “transwomen” or any other terms that give credence to the idea that they are somehow more special than other misogynist female impersonators. Radical Feminists never call men “women” of any kind or “she” or “her,” or call women “men.”

4. Radical Feminists are not liberal feminists, mainstream feminists, reformist feminists or right wing feminists. We oppose any dilutions of feminism, such as re-writing our history or pushing of right wing politics by more privileged women that deny early basic Radical Feminism. Radical Feminism is connected to Radical Lesbian Feminism and Lesbian Separatism (which is Radical Feminism at its most radical) and is an inclusive, diverse movement which welcomes all females, and which was created primarily by Lesbians and other women oppressed by classism and racism.

Re-defining feminism is similar to how the word “Lesbian” has been re-defined to include bisexuals, het women, and even men. Those who do not know our history keep trying to condemn us to repeat it.

5. Radical Feminists want a diverse, inclusive movement which welcomes all females. Of course males are our oppressors, but they have also set up hierarchies giving privilege to some women to encourage them to collaborate against more oppressed women.

Radical Feminists acknowledge the existence of and are dedicated to fighting heterosexism/Lesbian-hating, classism, racism, ethnicism, ageism, ableism, fat oppression, looksism, imperialism, nationalism, capitalism, etc. in patriarchy and among ourselves. If differences in power aren’t fought, then the

status quo power structure that men set up continues among us. Defending privileged women's power to oppress other women keeps the more privileged cultures dominant among us and lead to a segregated movement. We want to have as equal relationships and communities as possible and a truly diverse movement.

6. Radical Feminists have no leaders, no stars, no hierarchies.

7. Radical Feminists do not lie, threaten, bully, manipulate, play games, name-call, ridicule, taunt, insult, abuse, or use oppression against other women (such as using classist or racist terms aimed to humiliate women oppressed by classism or racism.)

8. Another serious dilution of our movement is the right wing politics that deny women have choices in our lives. Being oppressed does not mean no choices. Women feel powerless and victimized as it is. Saying no to males is one of the most important choices we can make. Male lies tell us that we were "born this way," and the offensive term, "sexual orientation," which is never applied het women, trivializes our choice of who we love as merely "sex." Early Seventies Radical Feminists talked with pride about the choices that we made to be Lesbian Feminists. Genderqueer and gay male politics of begging for equal rights based on lack of choice oppresses Lesbians. Bisexual women of course are choosing men over women.



## POEMS

by Ali Butticker Bee, feminist singer songwriter and poet

### WE ARE ALL THE CAGED BEAR

We are all the caged bear,  
The circus animal,  
The slave.  
Kept compliant  
With sugared words,  
The whip,  
Or hopes of small freedoms.  
We are all the  
Actors of our lives,  
Inventing each moment,  
Living our novel,  
Trying for truth.  
Never knowing what comes  
From the real us  
Or the trained animal,  
Face painted, costumed,  
Body distorted  
Seeking prizes for  
A trick well performed.



### THE ILLUSION OF BEING IN CONTROL

This ball gagged life  
Is not what you supposed  
And even if you hold the whip  
The rules are male imposed.  
This ball gagged life,  
You've wandered through it, mute,  
Insisting you're a rebel  
Whilst trying to look cute.  
This ball gagged life,  
You'll never be a winner  
The race is fixed, you'll only be  
A virgin or a sinner.  
This ball gagged life,  
Your body's not your own

You'll do as you are bid,  
You'll do as you are shown.  
This ball gagged life,  
While you heave against the chains,  
No wonder you are crazy,  
No wonder you're in pain.  
This ball gagged life,  
How much violence can we take?  
How much rape and murder  
Must we have before we wake?  
This ball gagged life,  
Filled with ever growing mourning  
While the masters murder us.  
Life shouldn't need a trigger warning.

## STILL I RAGE

Taught to be compliant,  
By neighbour,  
By parent's friend's brother,  
By daddy's 'airport books',  
Where women always  
Opened their legs and enjoyed,  
No matter who,  
No matter what,  
No matter where  
I raged and ate (anything, everything)  
I raged and was fucked (like this, like that)  
I raged and was beaten (safe word, no words)  
I raged and you laughed (daddy, my daddy)  
I raged and wept  
And weep,  
But still, I raged  
And rage, still.

## SLEEPING THROUGH REVOLUTION

Slowly, Slowly,  
I went to sleep.  
I closed my eyes,  
So they would not weep.  
I shut my mouth,  
So I would not scream  
At the horrors that  
My eyes had seen.  
And time rolled on.

Slowly, Slowly,  
I shut my ears,  
To other women's dreams  
And fears.  
Slowly their voices  
Died away  
As I refused to listen  
To what they'd say.  
And time rolled on

Slowly, slowly,  
I shut my heart  
And turned my back,  
Till I lived apart,  
Away from the world  
Of women's fate  
And I lost myself  
To lies and hate.  
And time rolled on.

Slowly, slowly,  
The madness came,  
As I performed  
And played the game.  
I embraced the pain  
And called It good  
As any captive women  
Should.  
And time rolled on.

Near thirty years have drifted past,  
But now I am awake, at last.

## **BACK IN THE DAY**

Back in the day,  
When we were young and  
Full of hope,  
When women had their places  
To dream and plan  
A future for their daughters,  
Where women could love women  
Freely  
And not be defined by tv, fashion mags  
And porn.  
We were so innocent then,  
We thought that we  
Could fix it all with talk.  
30 years,  
Still we talk,  
Still our lives and sex  
And safety stolen from us.  
Cis'd and dismissed.

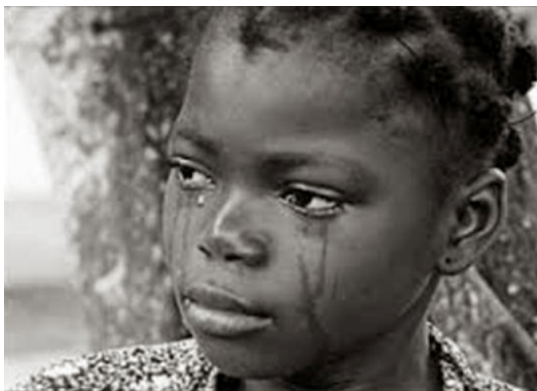


Here's a beautiful pic of Ali Butt kicker Bee.  
You can contact Ms. Bee on facebook or  
email her at moonsinger0@yahoo.com



# IF YOU ARE FEMALE

By Terre Spencer



Women are 2/3rds of the hungry of the world;  
women are 2/3rds of the illiterate of the world;  
and women are 2/3rds of the poorest of the poor.  
**That cannot be an accident; that is a policy.**  
It's time for religions everywhere to become truly  
religious.

-Sister Joan Chittister

[www.thegirlgod.com](http://www.thegirlgod.com)

If you are female, the 6000+ year existence of patriarchy is a long war of terror upon you and every one of your sisters with untold millions of female casualties.

If you are female, even if you are not being beaten and sold this very minute, you are a slave to the male gaze, to male expectations of “woman.” If you think that the hours you spend on your appearance are “for myself” the terror has colonized your mind.

Every catcall, every denied job, every assumption that male is normal and female is “other” is an act of war. Every education denied, every FGM, every time men interrupt, dismiss, deny, minimize, patronize or in any way fail to allow women a seat at the table of power —because power is what we are really talking about, not constrained “choices.”—a skirmish has occurred. Except it is so normal that we do not call it an act of war any more.

Every abortion denied, every attempt to make contraception difficult to obtain, every attempt to shame women for taking power over their own lives is an act of aggression.

Every female selectively aborted, abused, violated, assaulted, attacked with acid, married off against her will, shamed, raped, prostituted and/or murdered is a casualty in this long, long war on women.

We have turned the other cheek. We have coddled, ignored, placated, and done exactly what you've asked. We have given you 6000+ years of unpaid labor and submission. Your misogyny increased. You gun us down us for the crime of being female.

This is not about "guns" or "mental illness," this is about the hatred of women: misogyny. As painful as it is, women need to see that #yesallmen benefit from patriarchy. Your son, your husband, your boyfriend, you father, you brothers, uncles, cousins. Every man benefits from patriarchy. And misogyny is growing. In those same men. Women, you cannot shirk from this reality.

Men steal our time, our accomplishments, our emotional succor, our energy and our lives. The little flashes of time that we call "war" (where men go maim and kill each other while raping and killing women as "collateral damage") are intentional distractions so that the everyday crimes that men commit against women all day, every day with patriarchal blessing are not looked at.

I have had enough. Do not expect me to see misogyny as anything less than an act of war. Because I won't. Because seeing the enemy clearly is the first step in defending ourselves. It is time to wake up. Yes, it is all men.

And, no, I will not plead with, bargain with, beg or in any way negotiate with men for better treatment. Men can well deal with their own loss of humanity themselves. I will continue to help women see that patriarchal misogyny is the very air that we breathe every day. Because when women see that, we enter the war with eyes open and are fully prepared to engage battle.

Patriarchy is war on women and men are war criminals by their own definition.

For women, the war is every moment of her life. There is no bunker to return to, no trench to dodge the bullets. Men are everywhere, taking up space and dominating our lives.

Start with saying that being born female is to be born into a lifelong war. Start with that. And see the misogyny everywhere. And pray to goddess that you do not get shot today for simply being female.

# WHAT IS RADICAL FEMINISM?

By Jitana Rose

Find Jitana online on facebook!



Radical Feminism is woman- centred feminism. Strange that I should even have to define a ‘type’ of feminism as being ‘woman centred’ isn’t it? You would think that ALL feminism is woman-centred, after all feminism is about fighting for women’s rights? Sadly no. Much of the current feminism has been diluted and now concerns itself with ‘equality’ of men and women, ‘gender discrimination’ and individual empowerment/ identity.

So, first it might be best to explain what Radical Feminism is NOT!

Radical Feminism is not about ‘equality of the sexes’. There will never be any equality while Patriarchy exists. The only way we can make gains towards rights for women, is by fighting male power, not by asking for men to consider us equal. They have shown us repeatedly what they mean by equal. It simply means that women in theory can have the same rights as men but in practice we do not, because men still favour men and it is men who hold the vast majority of power positions in politics, law and business.

As mentioned in ‘Beauty and Misogyny’ by Sheila Jeffreys, and also ‘Backlash’ by Susan Faloudi, the move towards an individualistic feminist framework of personal empowerment came about at the same time that women began to benefit from the gains of the second wave efforts from the 1970s. Men, and their hapless supporters, sought to hold onto their control of the institutions of society and culture by sidelining feminism as an ‘individual’ empowerment issue. Porn culture took hold to remind women that we really are only sexual objects, and this trend was labeled “empowering.”

The institutions of the Patriarchy were not dismantled because they centre around Father Rule and this is about control of female sexuality through male violence. While it is important for the father to have a say, while it matters 'who is the Daddy', we still live in Patriarchy. This is not going to be solved by women doing some work outside of the home (while still also doing the majority of unpaid work) or a few women being successful in their own right, as allowed by men.

Women might have made some gains with regards to employment options, divorce and financial independence but men still kept their power over us as a sex class, legally and through culture. Women were never freed from the male gaze, or from sexual servitude to men. It doesn't matter how the 'liberal sex positive' feminists frame it, the fact is that prostitution exists for women to serve men sexually. As does marriage, heterosexual partnership and pornography. See Andrea Dworkin's many works about how the female prostitute is held up as the lowest class of person, and then all females are compared to this. And that won't change by legalizing prostitution. If we look at men's own words from websites dedicated to rating sex workers, such as on the Invisible Men Project, we can see just how much they despise us. Legalizing this is legalizing abuse.

So Radical Feminism is not about fighting for legalized prostitution or classifying objectification of women as empowering based on some individual experiences. Radical Feminism is about looking at the root cause of oppression, and saying that this is not sex, it is abuse of power by men that harms all women! And radical feminism is about acknowledging male violence as being the enforcing tool used by men as a class to keep women as a secondary sex caste. The male violence that sees women killed or maimed every day for saying no to men.

The other issue of conflict for Radical Feminists, and for which we are silenced, is gender critical analysis. This is the controversial point of view that men cannot become women by sex and vice versa. You'd think it wouldn't be so controversial because it's a biological reality however this simple fact of acknowledging reality seems to get women who are female-focused lumped in with the right wing Christians who we oppose. Just because I recognize that the sea contains salt water and so do Christians does not mean that I, in any other way, align myself with Christians. Gender is a damaging hierarchy used to oppress women. The vast majority of women are uncomfortable with our subordinate gender status. We do not 'match'

this subordinate status as a 'cis' woman. This is an insult. We must fight this hierarchy, not entrench it further.

So now men have divided all other feminists, besides Radical Feminists. Women in mainstream feminism are too busy falling over each other to be nice and inclusive to gender-queer men, "transwomen," to be able to deal with the socialized misogyny that these types often bring to the discussion. Mostly men are praised excessively and 'sex work' is looked at as being another job, because someone's gotta do it right? The men want it. So it's definitely required. Radical Feminism criticizes the structural oppression that leads to women being bought sexually. Not the women who are working in such a role. Mainstream feminism now supports pornography and 'sex work'.

Radical Feminism is not 'stuck in the second wave' (a common criticism), even if many of the core tenets of the 70's and 80's feminism are still relevant. The movement is evolving. There are many young women getting involved online. Many women are seeing the value in woman-centred feminism. In fact, many find even more of a need for it now, because due to queer theory's abuse of the intersectional model, you can barely say a thing in mixed sex space without a man accusing you of "cis-gendered privilege" or some other such thing, after which he begins pompously mansplaining feminism. You know it's true, and that is why we have Radical Feminism growing stronger by the day! The basic tenets of second wave feminism still remain relevant, the history of Lesbian Feminism, structural analysis of women's class oppression, the need for reproductive autonomy and dismantling of gender constructs remain as relevant today as ever.

It cannot be stated enough, that male violence is used to enforce male supremacy. Women are killed systematically world-wide for being born female, including in the US and other developed nations. Male violence is the biggest killer of women. We cannot be satisfied with men saying that we are equal under the law. Most male violence takes place in the private sphere. The issue of male supremacy based on sexual domination and violent enforcement needs to be acknowledged. Sadly, we are still asking for basic acknowledgment of women's oppression as a sex caste.

Where is Radical Feminism going? The movement is always changing, and is bringing in many new women, young and older, who inspire and contribute in their own way. Many women have simply had enough and want to say no

to men, and to be supported in saying no to men, in whatever way they wish to do so.

This kind of solidarity and consciousness raising is where the movement is at the moment. My opinion is that we should be aiming to set up a feminist movement where women support other women above men, and to do so we need to let go of some of the judgments of other women that we have internalized too. Radical Feminism incorporates environmentalism, social justice, material class analysis, international women's rights, domestic women's rights, Lesbian rights, and generally opposes male supremacist culture in many facets.

Personally I am working on Radical Feminism from the perspective of a single mother, as I strongly believe that dismantling Patriarchy involves women being supported to mother IN OUR OWN RIGHT without male approval, to be able to leave men, say no to men, and find solidarity against the cruel system that serves to bind mothers and children to men by law as property. Currently male violence is used by men to maintain their control over children. As it is against all women who attempt to say no to men.

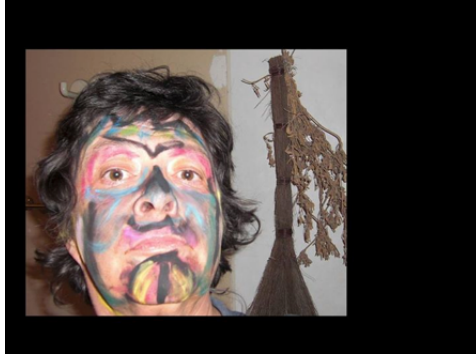
Despite this, I do feel it is possible to work with men in mixed sex spaces too. Some are doing this now and it is effective because Radical Feminist women are in management of such spaces. But ultimately the women's only space is the core of Radical Feminism and from where we find our power.

Lesbian Radical Feminists have always occupied a strong centre space in the movement, and are currently leading the way in standing up to men to demand women's only space for lesbians and all women, but these activists are facing an uphill battle. We must support our sisters in their right to say no to men. Men rule by fear and threats of reprisal (often violent) should women say no.

That is why I am writing this for Michfest, because there is nothing like being around other women only. The absolute freedom from the male gaze (a socialized male gaze that pervades even online spaces). This is where we get our true work done, in this male-free space. It is something that needs to be cherished and fought for, because the last thing men want, is women organizing and enjoying solidarity, away from male control. They know it is a threat. So if you look for the biggest flash points in feminism today, where the big fights are happening, that is where men are threatened. It really is that simple. May we stand defiant in the face of their threats.

## ROBBIE

by Miep Rowan O'Brian  
You can find Miep on Facebook.



I grew up in Culver City and my stepfather was a porn addict. He let me have the Playboys when he was done with them. I liked to read the cartoons. Other children would come by to look at the photographs.

I didn't care for them. They had nothing to do with me, certainly.

I wasn't close to other children, as a rule. We didn't have much in common. I spent a lot of time in the garage where I raised rats.

I met Robbie in sixth grade. It was around 1967. Robbie was a school out-cast, and my bases of popularity questionable. We became close friends.

Robbie would come visit me in the garage and we would play with the rats, and she would tell me about her life. Her much older drug-dealing siblings with access to such an exotic world featured heavily. And one day she confessed to me that one of their friends had fucked her. Yet more exotica.

We had both read Harriet the Spy. Harriet carried notebooks around and took notes on people, so we did too. Robbie carried hers, along with a multitude of other objects, such as cigarettes, inside the torn lining of her pea coat, which she wore with nylons. She was not popular with the other children, who thought her ugly, with her powerful Russian features and odd habits. She got them back by assigning animal identities to them, and springing up to them on the playground, and reading her descriptions of them aloud to the children, with great dramatic flair.

I was in awe of this strange child. She was the most fascinating creature I'd come across in quite some time. I wrote about her in my notebooks, and at one point noted that she seemed a little queer.

Our family had a gay male friend, so I knew about that, but the concept of lesbians was entirely foreign to me, as foreign as the concept of any kind of female sexuality was. Those women in the magazines, not to mention the ones in the hard-core novels I read on the sly, clearly weren't anybody I had anything in common with. I read anything I could get my hands on, but the only definition for "queer" that I had available was "odd."

My mother and stepfather divorced during this time and my mother went to work. I came home from the library one day, to what should have been an empty house, and found Robbie, who had broken in, sitting on my bedroom floor reading my notebooks aloud to a flock of neighborhood children. As I stood in shock, she leafed open my note and hatefully read it aloud.."Robbie seems a little queer."

Then they all ran off. Baffled and betrayed, I lost my friend. Then we moved away, and five years later I moved back to Los Angeles. At this point I had worked out what the misunderstanding was, and went by Robbie's house to look her up.

She was around nineteen by then, and still living with her severely alcoholic mother. She proudly showed me her backyard marijuana plants, which she had manicured into round bushes as camouflage. And she told me she was a lesbian, hanging her head in shame.

She had also taken up heroin, and told me to stay away from her, for my own good.

I looked her up again later that year, and was told she was dead.

Robbie was a legacy of the sixties, of the "free love" and tolerance so popular then. She was a casualty of the glorification of boundary transgression. And she must have loved me very much, but I never knew, because even during that era of freedoms, some things just weren't much spoken of. She was a child who could confess her rape to her best friend, but could not speak of her feelings for her.



And I didn't know, I had no idea, subsumed in porn and divorce as I was, that there was anything wrong. I had no sense whatsoever of what any kind of natural sexuality might be. It all seemed like something terribly alien that happened to other people.

Robbie haunts me. Children cannot be expected to save each other, that's what grownups are for. So I don't blame myself, but I can't help but remember, and wonder who she would have become, with her literary talent and her fine rage, if only she'd caught a break somehow. She and countless other fine girls, taken and broken, lost to us forever.

## **MALESPEAK WITH RADICAL FEMINIST TRANSLATIONS**

By Elaine Charkowski (copy-free and shareable).

To contact Elaine: utopiabold@gmail.com

Mary Daly in her book *Quintessence* wrote, "Naming the agent is required for an adequate analysis of atrocities." As linguist Julia Penelope has shown in her book *Speaking Freely: Unlearning the Lies of the Fathers' Tongues*, "Agent deletion is a dangerous and common mind-muddying flaw."

The purpose of "Malespeak" is to avoid naming MALE violence against women and it's perpetrators (MEN) specifically. After reading Carol Adam's books (*Neither Man Nor Beast*, *The Sexual Politics of Meat* and *The Pornography of Meat*) about how male violence against animals and women are not named, I watched for more instances of linguistic techniques to avoid naming male violence against women. Here are the kinds I have gathered so far. I'm sure there are more!

### **•The Absent Referent**

This refers to something without actually NAMING it. Carol Adams coined this term in her books linking men's abuse of women and animals. Animal examples of the absent referent are: "veal" (baby bull flesh) "steak" (cow flesh) "bacon" (pig flesh) etc.

Some examples of the absent referent that don't name men as the agents of women's agony are "domestic violence" "gender based violence" "family violence" "sexual violence" "intimate partner violence" or just "violence." All these timid terms dance around naming male violence, and thus, men as the agents. They also do not name those who men abuse – women.

Here is an extreme use of the absent referent by lawyers defending a school district in which an adult male teacher raped a twelve-year-old girl:

Malespeak: “Carelessness and negligence on her part, proximity, contributed to the happenings of the incident.”

Neither the perpetrator (the adult male teacher), his victim (the girl he raped), nor the crime of rape (“the happenings of the incident”) was mentioned. In addition, the lawyers blamed the girl for “causing” the man to rape her because of where she was (her “proximity”).

Radical feminist translation: “An adult male teacher raped a twelve-year-old girl. The lawyers said it was her fault because of where she was.”

#### •The Passive Voice

The agents (men) are not named.

Malespeak - “The women were raped.”

In this example, women are “doing” the “action” (being raped). This shifts the focus away from the men doing the raping. The absent referent is also used since men are not named. Malespeak can consist of more than one element.

Malespeak: “I refuse to watch as more than a billion women experience violence on the planet.”

Radical Feminist Translation: I refuse to watch as MEN inflict MALE VIOLENCE on more than a billion women on the planet.”

Again, the women are “doing the action” of “experiencing violence.” The absent referent is also used since men are not named. It’s male violence, not “violence.”

#### • The Active Voice

The perpetrators (men) and their victims are named, so this is not Malespeak.

Radical feminist translation- “Men raped the women.” The focus is on MEN doing the raping and the absent referent is not used since men are named as the rapists. Men are the subject of the sentence.

- **Gender-neutral language**

This uses obfuscation (lumping things together to obscure each of them, such as women and men). Gender-neutral language is a type of absent referent that avoids naming male abuses.

Malespeak- “Children are raping children because of seeing porn at a young age.”

Naming the sex of the abuser is necessary to name the agents, males, and the ones they rape, girls:

Radical feminist translation-”Boys are raping girls...”

Gender-neutral language can also be used to make women’s accomplishments invisible: In this case, the terms are “Native Americans” and “they.”

Malespeak- “Native Americans skinned buffalo, deer and other animals. They scraped and pounded the hides until clean and pliable. They sewed tipi covers, clothing, moccasins, and containers to carry their belongings. They adorned their containers and clothes with beautiful designs made from dyed porcupine quills. They were also responsible for childcare, gathering edible vegetables, and cooking all the meals. “

Radical feminist translation- “Native American WOMEN skinned buffalo, deer and other animals. The WOMEN scraped and pounded the hides until clean and pliable. . . .

- **Erasing and/or watering down women’s words**

Malespeak- The “women’s movement.”

This is Malespeak for “women’s liberation.” This erases the whole idea of liberation and no longer begs the question of who women need liberating from (men). Worse, “gender studies” (formerly “women’s studies”) erases both women and their need for liberation from men by using gender-neutral language to lump women and men together (obfuscation).

Radical Feminist translation-”women’s liberation.” This both states that women need to be liberated and who they need liberating from, men.

## •The False Equivalent

This is a type of obfuscation that blends male violence with female violence. This is to obscure the fact that violence is overwhelmingly male violence by equating it with the far fewer instances of female violence. Mary Daly called this use of language "Universalism." For example, "violence" is often cast as a sex-neutral human issue, since "women are violent too" "what about Margaret Thatcher" etc.

Below is data from the Bureau of US Justice Statistics

Males were almost 10 times more likely than females to commit murder in 2005.

ALL Homicide Types Listed by Sex (1976-2005) 88% Male, 11.2% Female."

Eldercide	Male 85.2%	Female 14.8%
Felony murder	Male 93.2%	Female 6.8% female
Sex related murder	Male 93.6%	Female 6.4%
Gang related murder	Male 98.3%	Female 1.7%
Drug related murder	Male 95.5%	Female 4.5%
Workplace murders	Male 91.3%	Female 8.7%
Argument murders	Male 85.6 %	Female 14.4%
GUN homicide	Male 91.3%	Female 8.7%
Multiple victims	Male 93.5%	Female 6.5%

Child murder:

Of those children killed by someone other than the parent, 81% were killed by MEN.

Child Molestation:

According to the US Dept of Justice, "Males are reported to be the abusers in 80% to 95% of cases." Thoriger, D., et al 1988. [http://www.yellodyno.com/html/child\\_molester\\_stats.html](http://www.yellodyno.com/html/child_molester_stats.html)

And last but not least, legal mass serial killings listed by the MILLIONS of people MEN killed in WARS (started by MEN).

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War#Nine\\_largest\\_wars\\_.28by\\_death\\_toll.29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War#Nine_largest_wars_.28by_death_toll.29)

1911 – The men who ruled Turkey disarmed its citizens, and between 1915 – 1917 they murdered 1.5 million Armenians.

1929 – The men who ruled Russia disarmed its citizens, and between 1929 – 1953 they murdered 20 million Russians.

1935 – The men who ruled China disarmed its citizens, and between 1948 – 1952 they murdered 20 million Chinese.  
1938 – The men who ruled Germany disarmed its citizens, and between 1939 – 1945 they murdered 6 million Jews.  
1956 – The men who ruled Cambodia disarmed its citizens, and between 1975 – 1977 they murdered 1 million Educated people.  
1964 – The men who ruled Guatemala disarmed its citizens, and between 1964 – 1981 they murdered 100,000 Mayan Indians.  
1970 – The men who ruled Uganda disarmed its citizens, and between 1971 – 1979 they murdered 300,000 Christians.

• **Giving words volition, making words into a person or thing with the power to act.**

Words just carry meaning, sounds from vocal cords or combinations of letters. However, Malespeak turns words into actual physical entities with the power to act:

Malespeak- “War broke out.” The word “war” is given the power to “break out.” This is also another use of absent referent that does not name the agents (men) nor their victims.

Radical feminist translation- “MEN decided to wage war to kill (fill in the blank of the ones men want to kill).”

Malespeak-“Israel bombed Palestine” “Israel” is just a word that defines a country, but Malespeak gives it the power to act (bomb Palestine). Again, the absent referent is used to avoid naming the agents (men) nor are their victims named:

Radical feminist translation- “The men who run the government of Israel ordered the bombing of women, children, men, animals, birds, trees, etc.” The agents not named are those who flew the bombers, nor are their victims named.

Male violence against women is one kind of male violence that impacts half the human race. Other forms of male violence include, but are not limited to: racism, colonization, genocide, nationalism and Ecocide, the murder of the Living World (environmental male violence against Mother Earth).

In her book “Come Inside the Circle of Creation,” Elizabeth Dodson said that patriarchy is the fatal need to rank diversity. If we try to rank all the abuses within human society by claiming that “our” abuse is more important and

worse than “their” abuse, we also rank the value of its victims. Thus, the hierarchy and all its divisions that keep us separate and fighting with each other are preserved.

However, there is only one type of male violence that must be ranked as the worst of all. This is Ecocide, men’s systematic murder of the Living World upon which humanity and all life depends. It is implemented by capitalist patriarchy.

In ALL of these types of violence, no matter if collaborators help them or not, MEN are the common denominator and are in control of all aspects of male violence.

Male violence is the worst problem in the world.

## **RADICAL FEMINIST STATEMENT**

Prepared by Thistle Pettersen, singer/songwriter and community organizer

Greetings! Hope you’re havin’ a Great Fest this year! I hail from Madison, WI, historically the seat of many radical and progressive movements, all of them male-dominated, except the Lesbian Separatist movement.

Radical Feminism is about using our minds to be critical and to analyze the imbalance of power in society that keeps women down through pornography, prostitution, gender and male violence of any kind.

In addition, and this is the fun part, Radical Feminism is about networking with women all over the world to spark up powerful and articulate feminist voices to burn away our oppression. I am co-organizing and sustaining several women’s empowerment groups in my region and spend a lot of my time and energy trying to bring women together in our friendships, solidarity and sisterhood.

This is my new focus after years of trying to work within the male left to build solidarity and effective actions to stop environmental and social destruction. Since I was publicly labeled “transphobic” in the fall of 2012, it has become increasingly hard to work within male-dominated activist circles.

Radical Feminism is about women loving and supporting women through hard times and in our good times as well.

Our flame will grow by coming together in social spaces that are free of men – online and in real life.

## About reality...

No matter how you do your hair or nails or whatever – being male or female is just a biological fact – one that is used to create a social system of male power over females.

Patriarchy tells us that it is desirable to spend thousands of dollars on unnecessary and harmful medical procedures/surgeries and fashion to do something that is impossible and undesirable – which is to change biological sex.

Unfortunately, there are more and more who are “transitioning” and it is becoming easier and easier to “identify as ‘trans’” or to be a “trans ally.”

“Trans” is not based on anything other than what’s in our minds – anyone can be “trans” by claiming to be or by feeling like they are and then taking small or big steps to “transition.” People who formerly identified as “trans” and now see that it is a false and harmful category, are being told that they “never really were ‘trans.’” Who is the authority on who is legitimately “trans” or not? Nobody is! Because it is not a real thing. It is a tool used to keep women down and keep society distracted from reality as we go full force into the environmental and socio/economic nightmare that is our future.

Transgender politics impact all women because we are coerced into accepting something that is not real, but that has real consequences in our abilities to organize away from men. If even one man, dressed as a woman comes into our women-only spaces, the whole experience of that space is transformed by his violent presence. I say “violent” because he is violating a boundary we have set. Even if he just keeps to himself in the corner! His presence changes our perceptions of ourselves and of our space. It causes us to think about him, instead of keeping the focus on each other. Not to mention, men sexually harass and rape us, so to have one sitting quietly in the corner, is not exactly the “safest” of environments for a women-only space, especially if there is alcohol involved.

Transactivism impacts women’s ability to unify and show solidarity even when there are no “trans” people present. Just the idea of “transgender rights” as a legitimate front for social change is harmful to women’s solidarity and movement. It is so sad and infuriating, that even lesbians are calling other lesbians “hateful” if they question the good of transgenderism.

Transactivism is a social movement fueled by misogyny – even though individual people who identify as “trans” may not take part in the hate and slander that goes on in the name of “trans inclusion.”

## **A Few Thoughts to Share about the Witch Hunt of Radical Feminists**

Merriam-Webster's definition of "man": an adult male human being. and then, you guessed it! The term "woman" means "adult female human being."

Women are not "oppressors" when we refuse to call a man "they" or "she" or if we don't accept the term "cis" to describe ourselves and how we fit into the scheme of things.

Basically, when someone says you are oppressing people if you don't see them the way they want you to see them, they are misusing the term "oppression."

A man demanding to be seen as anything other than a man is oppressing the woman he is talking to when she resists or questions his "gender identity." Transgenderism is an oppressive ideology that hurts girls and women the most because it does not allow us to speak in our own terms about ourselves or about male violence and dominance in our lives.

Women do not oppress men ("trans women" are men) because we are not in positions of gender power and privilege in society. Merriam-Webster's dictionary online defines the word "oppression" to be a : unjust or cruel exercise of authority or power b : something that oppresses especially in being an unjust or excessive exercise of power.

Since it is clearly men who have gender power and authority in society, it is clearly NOT women who are "oppressive" in terms of gender. Despite this, women who dare to speak out with a feminist analysis of "transgender" are labeled "oppressive" "unsafe", "mentally ill", "socially toxic" and even "hateful" and "bigoted." The reason for this labeling, as far as I can see, is because we refuse to believe that men can be something other than men or that men can be women (and vice versa for women) or that it is a desirable goal to try.

### **Carrying the Flame into the Future**

I want a women's movement that is for and by women and that is not afraid to name the problem; male violence. I want a women's movement that sticks up for women, instead of bowing down to male rule via terms like "trans inclusion." I want to be friends and activist comrades with men who respect that women need time away from men to heal and to form our own women's culture. I want a movement where women are not slandered, scolded and feared when we assert our rights. I want a movement that is not deceived by the lie that humans can be anything other than male or female – even with the few exceptions of folks who display characteristics of both. Just because a small percentage of the population does not fit neatly



into the biological categories “male” and “female”, does not mean it is okay to dismiss the needs of the majority of us who do.

I am tired of women defending the transactivist agenda that hurts our ability to just be and exist as female people, separate from men. Women’s fear and capitulation to male rule is a huge problem. I hope reading this has inspired you to defend women’s spaces more fiercely and to support women more fiercely in women’s spaces.

There is no such thing as “trans”, other than it exists as a social phenomena that intentionally or unintentionally, promotes male rule of our lives and separates us from our connection to ourselves and the laws of nature.

Finally, thanks again for picking up this zine. I hope it has helped you to feel the Sparks and Flame of Radical Feminism as it grows this year and into the future. It is wonderful to stand with the written words of the women who contributed their voices to this zine, some of whom, are Lesbian Separatists.

Glad to be here with y’all this MichFest 2014. May there be many more MichFests to come and many more women’s spaces created.

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Like “Thistle & Thorns” on facebook for updates on my shows and music.

Check out my blog at <http://www.thistlespace.org>

Hope you enjoy my songs!



Me with my bike in the fall of 2011 in Madison. I rode my bike for three years around the United States from 2003-2006. Since then, I have helped organize large group bike rides called GrassRoutes Caravans to exciting destinations such as the police state in Chicago in 2012 during the NATO protests and actions.