



The Awakening

The student journal of the Women's Studies Program

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Connections

A Note from the Editor

The institutions and people to which we are connected speak volumes about who we are. Good or bad, others use this information to make judgements about us before they get to know us. We derive our identities from the clubs we belong to, the friends we have, and the jobs we hold. Having a multitude of connections—in clubs, in friendships, among family members—allows us to step away from other aspects of our lives momentarily and find an escape from the more mundane or undesirable things to which we can be obligated.

Just as connections can have an important function in our personal lives, they can also speak to the ideologies or intentions of the institutions and organizations around us. For example, the clothing store Urban Outfitters, which caters to shoppers with a more alternative taste, lost some business when their association with the Republican Party was revealed. Regardless of whether or not connections are intentional, they play an important

role in helping us make decisions.

This issue of *The Awakening* seeks to examine some of the ways in which connections function in our society. On page two, I discuss the people behind the scenes at the new Women's Center, showing that to some, forming relationships among people can be a full time job. On page four, I review the book *BITCHfest*, which connects feminism and pop culture with a sense of humor. On page five, I examine the way Hollywood connects lesbianism and deviant sexuality while trying to examine female friendships in the film *Notes on a Scandal*, showing that not all connections are positive. Finally, on page six WS FUN provides another installment of the Women's Studies Mixtape with their favorite songs about relationships. Enjoy reading, and take a moment to appreciate the connections in your life.

Thanks for reading,
Allie Nordman, Editor

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Ohio University's New Women's Center Opens in Baker Center

By Allie Nordman



Interim Director Beatrice Selotlegeng and Assistant Marlene Jenkins welcome people to the new Women's Center

The opening of the new Baker Center also marked the unveiling of the Women's Center at Ohio University. Tucked somewhat away toward the back of the fourth floor, the center has found a welcome home among students, faculty, and community members alike.

Just from looking around, one can see its many avenues for potential. Throughout the space, there are groupings of comfortable armchairs and coffee tables with small, flower-filled vases topping them. Around the room are hand-made posters, all contributed by various groups in Athens. They were put up for the grand opening, and remain now as a testament both to the abundance of women's clubs in Athens and the center's dedication to providing connections between community members and students. Immediately upon entering people are greeted by the friendly and accommodating Interim Director Beatrice Selotlegeng and Assistant Marlene Jenkins.

Most visitors have the same question: they want to know what exactly a "women's center" does. The main goal of the center is to serve as a connection point between faculty, staff, students, and community members. The administrators hope the center will be known as a place filled with readily available resources, as a safe haven for those with issues they wish to discuss, and a place in which people with different backgrounds and lifestyles can be united. They also wish to provide a quiet environment, as Marlene says they often have quiet music playing and welcome people to stop in and sit for a while.

Right now the Women's Center is still trying to get the word out that they're open. They've been trying to advertise the center by doing interviews with newspapers and spreading the word among students. To help draw people in, they have several events planned. They are planning gatherings to teach skills such as



The center houses many small conversation areas.

knitting, crocheting, and basic sewing—things it can be hard to pick up just from reading a book. They are also planning what they call “Brown Bag Thursdays.” Beginning on March 29th, the events will be held every Thursday at Noon. Each week will feature its own topic for discussion, guided by a different moderator. Participants are encouraged to bring a lunch to the discussion, and all are welcome to attend.

So far, the center has served several purposes. Some clubs have decided to begin holding their meetings in the center and many students have come to lounge in the chairs or find a quiet place to read. Also, Jenkins says, some people have just become interested walking past the door and decided to stop in for a while to see what it was all about. One full wall of the Women’s Center is lined with bookshelves stocked with an ever-increasing number of books, most linked to gender or women’s studies. The bookshelves make up the center’s lending-resource library, comprising over 200 books, all donated from various individuals. Selotlegeng says, “It’s a great example of the community doing for itself.” All the books can be borrowed at any time by anyone, and range from women’s studies classics to lesser known or more recent books about women’s issues and gender. They hope to continue building the library, and will continue to accept donations of books, as well as art and décor for the center.

When asked how individuals can contribute to the center, both Selotlegeng and Jenkins agree that helping get the word out about the center is one of the biggest things people can

do. Selotlegeng says, “Students are the largest constituent body at Ohio University, and they must understand the center exists to serve them. They must utilize the space and create a trusting environment so ills can be brought forward.” Jenkins also says, “The community should tell us what they want from us so we can provide it for them.”

They hope the community will use the center to its fullest potential. From talking to Selotlegeng and Jenkins it’s clear they don’t think of the center as just some job, or just another bureaucratic office at the university, they really do want to help people. Jenkins tells me what she means when she talks about the center’s “fullest potential:” she wants people to show up both to talk in discussion groups and to hear lectures, she wants people to peruse the library, to share their talents and hopefully meet others who can teach them new ones. She tells me of a woman who came in the previous week and confessed she didn’t know how to sew a button. Jenkins told her to stop in and they would teach



Bookshelves line one wall of the center, containing all donated books from community members.

her. That’s what she means by fullest potential—they want people to recognize the range of services they will strive to provide for people. Overall, Jenkins says she wants people to know that “the center is open, and it belongs to you.” She says, “You should bring your skills and let us know what you have to offer. We can all learn from one another.” Ultimately, the Women’s Center, like so many other aspects of life at Ohio University, is what you make of it. There are countless resources available in the center, all you need to do is ask.

***BITCHfest* Connects Feminism and Pop Culture With a Sense of Humor and a Critical Eye**

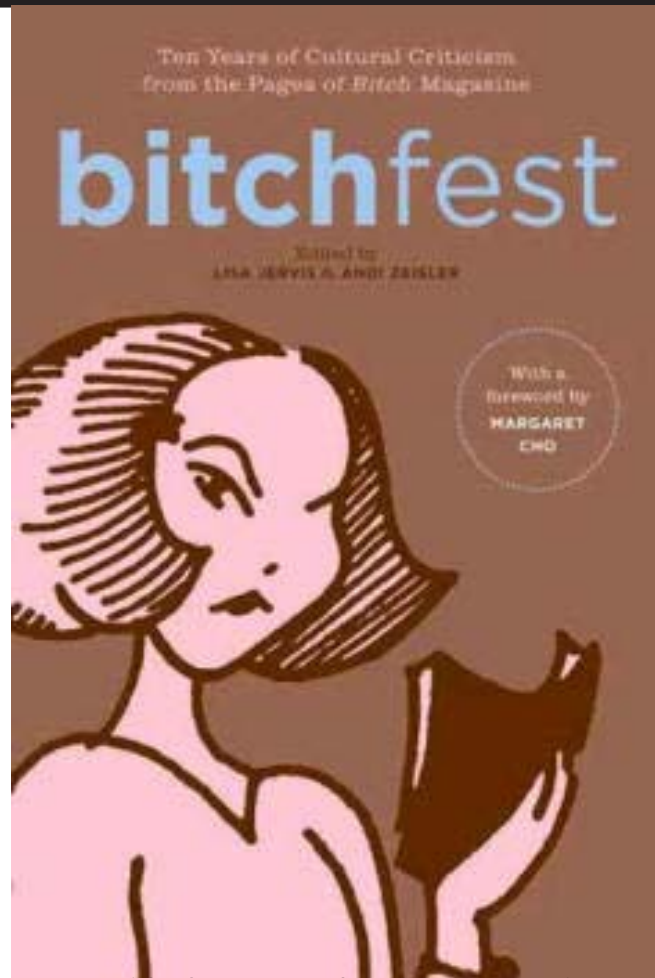
By Allie Nordman

Longtime readers of *Bitch* Magazine will find leafing through the essays in *BITCHfest* a lot like being reunited with a group of old friends. Those who haven't read *Bitch* before may be left wondering why they've missed out on the last ten years. Fortunately for us all, though, *BITCHfest*, released for *Bitch's* ten year anniversary, chronicles the best and most loved articles from the magazine's decade long span.

Started in 1996 by editors Lisa Jervis and Andi Zeisler, *Bitch* was originally a photo-copied, hand stapled 'zine. They've come a long way since then, but have managed to maintain their accessible, often snarky feminist focus on pop culture. Features of the magazine include a love it/shove it section, in which they write about aspects of pop culture that are either pro-feminist (love it), or reinforce sexist ideas (shove it). They often feature a "Jane Petty Criticism Corner" in which they go over the unfortunate ways in which the almost-feminist *Jane* magazine consistently just misses the mark. The issues also contain several longer essays which examine trends in pop culture using a more in-depth analysis.

Feminism has always had to counter the idea that it's an ideology created by women who lack a sense of humor. *Bitch* proves that feminists do have a sense of humor, but realize there's nothing funny about advertisements or TV shows that perpetuate the inequality that marks so many aspects of our society.

For many of us in the Third Wave, *Bitch* served as its own awakening. Where many of us were raised to believe feminism was either angry or academic, picking up *Bitch* for the first time showed us that feminism could be fun too. The magazine gave us our first opportunity to see feminism apply itself to a public realm. It proved that when we felt something was



wrong with that new advertising campaign, or when we weren't sure how we felt about that sitcom, there was a forum in which there could be an informed social critique of the everyday things we're surrounded by.

BITCHfest touches on a bit of everything in the magazine's past—from the fun favorites like "Urinalysis: On Standing Up to Pee," by Leigh Shoemaker, and "Prattfall: Ten Things to Hate About *Jane*," by Zeisler and Jervis, to the slightly heavier pieces like "How to Reclaim, Reframe, and Reform the Media: A Feminist Advocacy Guide," by Jennifer L. Polzner.

The release of *BITCHfest* is an important landmark for Third Wave feminism. When it was first released, *Bitch* showed everyone that feminism and pop culture could not only be linked to one another, but it could be funny. *Bitch* proved wrong those who doubted the movement could let its hair down; it provided a place for those of us in the movement to do so. Ultimately, *BITCHfest* provides the retrospective pick-me-up that is so often necessary for feminism, and Zeisler and Jervis couldn't have done it any better.



***Notes on a Scandal* Recycles Old Ideas about Lesbianism**

By Allie Nordman

Notes on a Scandal has been described by critics as “riveting,” “brilliant,” and “stylish,” and was nominated for a total of four Oscars, one of which was for Best Writing in an Adapted Screenplay. The film centers on one woman, Sheba (played by Cate Blanchett), a young, pretty mother of two, who accepts a job in a London school as an art teacher, where she quickly gains favor with students and faculty alike. Just as quickly, she begins a relationship with one of her students, and, unbeknownst to her, a one-sided love affair with the older history teacher Barbara (played by Judi Dench). I was initially excited to see the movie, thinking it would confront issues of inter-generational relationships, examine the situations that arise when a woman is seen as the responsible partner in a sexual relationship, and look at women’s friendships in a critical way.

Upon seeing the film, however, I was disappointed. It did none of these. Instead, *Notes on a Scandal* turned out to be a tired story featuring another old closeted lesbian, a spinster to her colleagues and family and a deviant, sexual predator to the young, pretty women she can lure in.

Barbara’s character looks exactly like the 1950’s pop-culture depiction of lesbians that most of us today recognize as offensive and inaccurate. Like your typical old maid, she lives alone in a frumpy, antique looking house, cat and all. She spends her evenings journaling dreamily about her interactions with Sheba, and between sappy monologues about loneliness collects tokens of their friendship which she keeps pressed between the pages. She presents the lesbian identity as one marked by solitude, isolation, and lovelessness.

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Students from WS FUN, the Women's Studies Feminist Undergraduate Network, share their favorite songs about connections.

Le Tigre- Hot Topic

You're getting old, that's what they'll say/ But Don't give a damn /I'm listening anyway/don't you stop/ I can't live if you stop

Kathleen Hanna has always been known for her appreciation of older feminists, and this is Le Tigre's attempt not only to pay them homage, but use their continuing activism as an example to remind Third Wavers that despite resistance, they haven't given in and neither should we.

Joanna Newsome- Peach, Plum, Pear

We speak in the store/ I'm a sensitive bore/ And you're markedly more/ And I'm oozing surprise/ But it's late in the day/ And you're well on your way/ What was golden went gray/ And I'm suddenly shy

Joanna Newsom captures the unsettling feeling of missed connections, but perhaps a failed relationship as well.

Mirah-Sweepstakes Prize

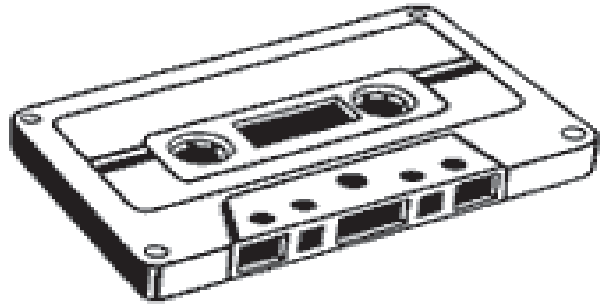
I ask you if you ever think that maybe/ It's what's inside of us that drives us crazy/ Fingers feeling underneath your skin/ There's blood and bones and some rivers to fall in

Sleater-Kinney- Lions and Tigers

I'd like to show you a million things/I'd like to make the world for you a better place/But when it pours, it really rains/ So put on your boots, and let's play

This is a sweet song told in the voice of a parent addressing a child, but can easily be reminiscent of any relationship formed with a younger person.

Women's Studies



Mixtape

Karen Dalton-Substitutue

My man went away/ I said I'd miss him every night and day/ Then I began to look around/ Wish I could show you what I found/Sweet substitute/My new recruit is mighty sweet and cute/ I'm crazy 'bout my substitute

This song is Dalton's reflection on how she thought her heart was broken, but found that she had the power to find a "new recruit". Dalton's voice always has a mournful ring to it, but it takes on an ironic tone in this song that almost seems to mock her former lover for being so easily replaced.

Bikini Kill-Rebel Girl

When she talks/I hear the revolution/When she walks/The revolution's coming/Rebel girl you are the queen of my world/I think I wanna take you home/I wanna try on your clothes

This song is the perfect ballad of punk rock friendship. Kathleen Hanna shouts her way through this song giving credit to the "rebel girl" of her neighborhood, who reminds us all of the "bad girl" friends we had growing up.

Get involved at OU

Empowering Women of Ohio

The purpose of this organization is to raise awareness of issues concerning social justice, including but not limited to LGBT issues, women's rights and civil rights, through print media and radical activism.

Contact: swarmofdykes@ohio.edu

Jewish Women of Ohio University

The Jewish women of Ohio University strive to unite Jewish women and provide philanthropic and social activities.

Contact: jwo@ohio.edu

Women Acting for Change

Women Acting for Change is a group that raises awareness of gender issues. We organize, host

and help with events.

Contact: womenact@ohio.edu

Women's Studies Feminist Undergraduate Network

WS FUN seeks to create a network of feminist activism on the OU campus.

Contact: an168103@ohio.edu

Unified Sisters

To unite and strengthen women of color through learning real life skills to prepare ourselves for independent life beyond the college years.

Contact: usisters@ohio.edu

Up in Arms

Up In Arms is a network for activists on campus and within the greater Athens community to promote awareness, actions, and change through art and media.

Contact: upinarms@ohio.edu

Notes on a Scandal, continued from page 5

She lacks the network of friends from which single women typically derive their emotional fulfillment, thus simultaneously rejecting both that lesbians of a certain era are likely to be in long-term meaningful relationships, and that, in lieu of a relationship, long-term single-hood is an option which can be fulfilling to women.

Barbara embodies the age-old image of the predatory lesbian, the heartless, manipulative woman who will, under the guise of friendship and nurturing, emotionally seduce women until she can turn them into "one of her kind." Sheba, presumably like the previous woman Barbara had attempted to lure, Jennifer (who is referenced several times, but never seen), seems to see through her initially, but with a false perception of her intent. Despite her forward, clingy nature Sheba views her as an old woman eager for friendship, a testament to the invisibility of the lesbian in a world of assumed heterosexuality. Despite Barbara's somewhat pathetic, yet overt attempts at eroticism, Sheba seems oblivious to Barbara's feelings. It is not until she actually reads Barbara's diary that she realizes she is not a lonely, straight spinster, but rather a woman on the prowl. Her aggressive nature notwithstanding, however, Barbara is woman who is anything but sexual. Her fixation on Sheba is emotional, she speaks of a "lifelong partnership," and is more excited about the possibility of social companionship than sexual. From her speech it is fair to assume this has

always been her stance on partnerships.

After Sheba reads the diary, she lashes out violently at Barbara, and Barbara's reaction is both confusing and frustrating. She does not counter her hostility, but rather seems to recoil into an odd state of nothingness. She is not saddened by the loss of their friendship, she only hints at embarrassment over her misconceptions. Barbara reacts as a haggard old woman would, almost as if years of outing and rejection have dulled her to an insensitive "this again" take on the end of relationships. Finally this is reinforced as the dissolution of Sheba and Barbara's friendship is followed by a melodramatic summary of Barbara's friendship with Jennifer (Barbara's done it before! She's clearly delusional!), and then, the clincher, the assumed beginning of yet another torrid and manipulative friendship as she meets a young woman on the same bench on which she once sat with both Jennifer and Barbara (and now she'll do it again to this poor girl!). Barbara turns out to be a serial seducer, albeit equally serial in her failure.

Most of us like to think we've gotten somewhere as a society, and it seems like we have, but when looking at the popularity of a film like *Notes on a Scandal* it seems like we're still idling in that pre-sexual revolution place where lesbians are evil, where women who don't marry and stick to it are asking for trouble, and where it's easier to ogle in a "thank God its not me" way to than to really think about what's happening to "them."

Spring Quarter Course Listing

Women's Studies Courses:

WS 100 Introduction to Women's Studies

06860 | MW | 10:10 am-12:00 pm | Little
 06861 | TTh | 9:10-11:00 am | Stokes
 06862 | MW | 1:10-3:00 pm | Krouse
 06863 | TTh | 9:10-11:00 am | Nickles
 06864 | TTh | 12:10-2:00 pm | Friday
 06865 | TTh | 4:10-6:00 pm | Koonce

WS 200 Issues in Feminism

06866 | MW | 1:10-3:00 pm | Hall
 06867 | MW | 10:10 am-12:00 pm | Friday

WS 210 Women, Gender and Rock & Roll

06868 | T | 6:10-10:00 pm | Burgess

WS 350 Feminist Theory

06869 | MW | 3:10-5:00 pm | Little
 55074 | World Wide Web | Grant

WS 360 Internship: Women and Work

06870 | F | 10:10 am-12:00 pm | Wales

WS 411/511 Women and Globalization

06871/06875 | TH | 6:10-10:00 pm | Collins

WS 460/560 Gender, Sexuality, and Culture

06872/06876 | MW | 2:10-4:00 pm | Reynolds

WS 480 Capstone in Women's Studies

06873 | MW | 5:10 am-7:00 pm | Little

Cross Listed Courses:

CLAS 343 Women in the Ancient Mediterranean

01671 | MTTHF | 2:10 -3:00 pm | Palmer

CLWR 269B Religion, Gender and Sexuality

TBA | TTh | 1:10-3:00 pm | Collins

COMS 420 Gender and Communication

01766 | T | 6:10 -10:00 pm | Harter

ENG 153A Writing and Reading: Gender

06897 | TTh | 3:10-5:30 pm | TBA

ENG 306J Women and Writing

02946 | MTThF | 8:10-9:00 am | TBA
 02947 | MTThF | 10:10-11:00 am | TBA
 02948 | MTThF | 10:10-11:00 am | TBA
 02950 | TTh | 1:10-3:00 pm | Holt
 02951 | MW | 3:10- 5:00 pm | Worthy
 02952 | MW | 4:10-6:00 pm | TBA
 02953 | TTh | 4:10-6:00 pm | Holt
 07047 | TTh | 3:10-5:00 pm | TBA

ENG 325 Women and Literature

02989/2990 | TTh | 3:10-5:00 pm | Holm

ENG 326 Lesbian and Gay Literature

02991 | MW | 3:10-5:00 pm | Webster

ENG 464 Authors: English

03019 | MW | 9:10-11:00 am | Snyder

GEOG 327A/527A Social Geographies

03301/03324 | MW | 1:10-3:00 pm | Whitson

HIST 320B/520B Women in American History After 1877

03663/03707 | MTWTh | 12:10-1:00 pm | Jellison

HIST 323A/523A Latin American History

03665/03707 | MW | 4:10-6:00 pm | Dantas

LING 390 Language of Women and Men

04430 | MW | 3:10-5:00 pm | Machenkova

POLS 420/520 Women, Law and Politics

05617/05664 | MW | 1:10 -3:00 pm | Richard

PSY 378 Psychology of Gender

05780 | TTh | 8:10-10:00 am | Demyan

TCOM 481 Women and Media

07055 | MW | 1:10-3:00 pm | Sandell

TCOM 486A/586A Age, Class, Gender and Race

06994/06995 | TTh | 3:10-5:00 pm | Nelson

The Awakening would love to hear from you!

Please send all submissions, letters, etc. to an168103@ohio.edu or bring to the Women's Studies Office in Lindley.