

GIRLTALK

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REDEFINING
Womanhood

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WELCOME TO GIRLTALK

Welcome to *Redefining Womanhood*, the fourth issue of Girl Talk Magazine!

Dear Readers,

Mass media devotes a significant amount of time to women and their bodies, especially today. Advertising promotes the idea that women are expected to adhere to a particularly crafted body and beauty standard with defined facial features and hair color. Imagery that narrowly define womanhood occupies our TV and computer screens. Perhaps the most prominent conversation about women's bodies taking up the most media space today began with Harvey Weinstein and was followed by an abundance of allegations reporting sexual harassment and assault. Many of these cases had been kept secret for decades, despite the fact that everyone knew they were occurring.

Girl Talk Magazine's second issue, *The Body Issue*, addressed body image on a personal level, its role in our lives, and how it affects the way we perceive ourselves. While *Redefining Womanhood* still contains self reflection, it focuses the issue of women's bodies with a more global perspective and the role they play in interactions between individuals, communities, and nations.

Along with pieces about consumerism shaping society, school's' approach to health class, reproductive rights, and many others, we got the opportunity to speak to women who are making marks on the world each day. Our conversations with Emine Bozkurt, advisor for the IDEA organization, reproductive justice activist Brittany Brathwaite, and a woman who witnessed the daily wrath of Harvey Weinstein at Miramax enhanced our understanding of the complexity of womanhood in a rapidly changing world.

This jam-packed issue begins with girls from all over the world expressing gratitude for women they are grateful for. With an approaching season filled with giving, there are countless women who deserve appreciation each day.

- Charlotte and Eunice

Enjoy.



"I'm thankful for my mom because even though we have our differences she always wants what is best for me."

- Matt Dederick

"Malala Yousafzai and Madeline Albright. Malala because she advocated for education through adversity and personal challenges, and Albright because she was the first woman Secretary of State in the US, a position that was almost reserved for men before her term."

- Gamin Kim

"Michelle Obama for her grace and leadership. The most inspiring moment for me is at the Democratic National Convention where she says "when they go low, we go high" in response to the rhetoric her and other women faced from President Trump. This speaks volumes to what character is acceptable and what embodies true leadership, most especially in when facing attacks that seem unfair."

- Tyree Ransom

"My great grandmother- for being unconventional, successful, and curious in a time where women were none of these."

- Charlotte Slovin

"I'm thankful for my birth mother for always supporting me and staying by my side."

- Sikkiim Hamilton

"I am extremely thankful for my mom. She was able to give up her entire career to come to a foreign country and take care of her children. A career she worked day and night to earn degrees and her Ph.D for. Even after building such a great background in her education, she was able to put aside her desires, in order to provide her children with a better life with more opportunities. Apart from her tremendous sacrifices, she was able to transfer her culture and morals to me to make sure that I don't forget my own roots. Regardless of being rewarded such knowledge through hard work, she maintained a down to earth aura that amazes me to this day. I am privileged to have such a caring determined and passionate woman as my mother and am even more blessed to share her blood and character."

- Diyah

"I'm thankful for my mother, which you've probably heard a lot, but I'm especially thankful of how much she pushes herself to learn about and understand me, while still being fun and funny and an all around lovely person. I'm so lucky to know someone like her and I want everyone to know how great she is!"

- Logan Boomer

"Nikki Haley, our ambassador to the United Nations, is a first generation American whose parents came to the United States as immigrants from India and built a successful life for themselves and their children. Nikki and her family truly embody the American Dream. She is not only the first woman elected as Governor of South Carolina, but the first Indian American woman to accomplish this. Nikki is not only a role model for women and young girls across the world, but is a champion for Conservative principles and is a representative for the millions of conservative women in our country. Nikki has taken the United Nations by storm and has regained the level of respect that the United States deserves on the international stage. Nikki is standing up to the retrogressive regimes that wreak havoc on our world in order to bring peace and make change. Nikki also serves on the National security council under President Trump to maintain our country's health and security. I think she should be recognized!"

- Phoenix Berman, Florida



"I am grateful for Eleanor Roosevelt, one of most outstanding First Ladies. She not only talked the talk, she walked the walk. She horrified Washington by dancing with an African American. She said, "Americans, after all, "come from all the nations of the world," and as some of us have remarked, we may be "the only proof that different nationalities could live together in peace and understanding, each bringing his own contribution, different though it may be, to the final unity which is the United States"

- Karen B. Prosser

"Michelle Obama."

- McKenna Burns



"Emma Goldman, easily the most underrated figure in American history. She was an outspoken activist in the early 20th century. Fighting for birth control and urging her followers not to register for the draft. She was a major figure in her time but most people haven't even heard of her."

- Zachary Hagen Smith

"I'm thankful for my mom. She has risen to the top of an industry in which men usually dominate. She is one of the few women who occupy her role, and I am inspired by her achievements everyday when I watch as she refuses to let the fact that she is a woman set her back or silence her. Everyone knows not to mess with my mom. She remains kind and warm-hearted but doesn't allow herself or anyone to be treated in ways they don't deserve. On top of working incredibly hard everyday, she makes time to be an incredible mother and has had such loving devotion to raising my sister and me. I don't know how she balances everything she does, but she never fails to inspire to me to be the best, most hard-working version of myself I possibly can."

- Charlotte Kramon

"I'm thankful for my mom for leaving her abusive husband and showing me and my sisters that women can support themselves without a man. She taught me to stand up for what I believe in, no matter what others may say. She loved me so I could learn to love myself."

- South Korea

"I'm thankful for Emma Watson because she's advocating for equality everywhere including in politics and in the performing arts business. I'm also extremely thankful for Michelle Obama. She's taught this country so much about class, kindness, and leadership."

- Shayna Gerard



"I'm thankful for my school teacher, because she is my mom and always believes in me and my dreams, no matter how big they are."

- Anonymous, Mexico

"I'm thankful for each and every woman that has had the courage to stand up against sexual predators that are in powerful positions. There is a depressingly long list of men in Hollywood who have been accused of sexual assault and harassment and I'm sure there are plenty more guilty that are to be named..and this is just in the entertainment industry. Every woman who made a statement put their careers and private life out in the open when it was not even guaranteed that all the public backlash they would get both for and against them would bring them justice. It still brings a lot of hope that maybe things will change and at the very least shows bravery toward young women today so that they won't feel like they have to just endure it or brush it off. This thanksgiving, I'll give thanks to the women who shared their stories and truths, in spite of the consequences that it brought them because they have opened the doors for other women to start speaking their truths."

- Hannah Ji

"I'm thankful for my grandmother for showing me how valuable education is, especially since she never got a chance to get one."

- Anonymous, Guatemala

"A woman I'm thankful for? My girlfriend. She listens so patiently to me and puts up with me ruining the mood with bitmojis, which I find way funnier than any human being should. Long distance is tough on anybody, but I'm her first girlfriend and she's a total goddess through everything that her family and homophobic people in Saskatchewan put her through. I owe my sanity to her, and even though we're in Canada and our Thanksgiving is over, I'm so thankful that she's in my life, and that she wants to stay in it."

- Audrey Coolidge, Canada



"Ellen Degeneres would be the one I'm most thankful for, as she was a role model to me at a specific time in my life when I wasn't doing so great emotionally. She taught me to not take life so seriously and to be okay with being gay."

- Raymar Lagos

"I'm thankful for Priyanka Chopra. She inspires me to become an actress like her, and take on roles that break gender stereotypes."

- Anonymous, India

"I'm thankful for my mom because she is a strong and amazing woman who has truly taught me how hard work and determination can pay off. She worked her way up to becoming a leader in her field and is able to balance an amazing career and motherhood."

- Alyse Rovner



"Ruth Bader Ginsburg, the second female justice ever to be appointed to serve on the Supreme Court. She on the board of directors for the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and was a strong proponent of equality and women's rights. And thank you Eunice for doing this; we need women to look up to."

- Judy Zhang

MANUFACTURED BEAUTY

The Consumer Trap

by Charlotte Kramon
OAKWOOD SECONDARY SCHOOL

Hardly a day goes by where images of photoshopped men and women with unattainable characteristics are plastered in every aspect of our daily lives, reinforcing the narrative that they represent not only what everyone should look like, but what they can look like.

The Dove Global Beauty and Confidence Report included over 10,500 women and girls ages 10-60 of 13 countries. 89% of women in Australia have cancelled plans, job interviews, and other activities simply because of concerns over their appearance. The US and UK had similar results. In the US, only 24% of women have high body-esteem. 77% of Australian women blamed "unrealistic standards" set by the media as the main perpetrator of such widespread insecurity.

The general complaint about many images in advertising that relay unfair beauty standards are about the unachievable standards they set. However, the root of the problem lies in consumerism and materialism. The markets that use images which perpetuate ridiculous norms, including the fashion, cosmetic, and beauty industry, tell us that although we may not have achieved those standards yet, achieving them is entirely possible.

A successful brand conditions the consumer to never be satisfied with what they have. They tell us that we need to have perfect skin and a slim, hourglass body, and in order to achieve that, we must buy their product. They condition society to believe that if we as women don't have sex appeal, we are worth less, and the only way to look sexy is to look like the models we see in media. Women portrayed on billboards squeeze their cellulite for it be "freezed" off, as if having body fat is abnormal. We then open a magazine with a wom-

an in intricately designed lingerie and a slim, cellulite-free body, glowing skin, and long, thick hair. When these images are all we see, we assume there's only one type of body when in reality, there are countless different shapes and sizes.

In Japan, women use around 10 products a day. They are told that their skin must be light, and often walk around with umbrellas in order to protect their skin from sun damage. There are 50 new skin lightening products per year. In the US, we are told that tan skin defines beauty and are given images of self-tanners. Women and girls often spend their summers trying to get as dark as possible.



A mainstream advertisement shows a man trying to flirt with two women, but he can't seem to get their attention. As soon as he tries a skin darkening cream and gains a bronze tan, the women are all over him. All of these images depict media and the marketing conditioning us to be dissatisfied with our appearances. These scenarios expose the question, do we try to adhere to beauty standards for ourselves, or for others?

To answer this question, we must

unpack the consequences of consumerism. The industry spreads the idea that difficult and emotional times can be repaired with stuff rather than relationships with people. (This is where retail therapy comes from.) The obsession with possession plays into the natural concern about social status, which is defined by the amount of stuff you have. An addictive consumer keeps buying more stuff in attempt to reach the unattainable goal they associate with high social status, but they're never satisfied. Similarly to how people use around 10 beauty products a day in Japan, people keep wanting more and more.

A study by Ohio State University psychology professor Robert Arkin, PhD, and LinChiat Chang, PhD, suggests that those with lower self esteem buy more and exhibit increased materialism due to seeking the approval of others.

Arkin said, "Self-doubters evaluate themselves from the perspective of others. So, the pleasure one of them would take from having a possession might not be defined so much by how much they enjoy it, but by how much others covet it."

Advertising takes advantage of our desire for social acceptance. They tell us that we are flawed, and we need their products to fix those flaws. By fixing those flaws, others will accept us and want what we have.

Insecurity starts at a young age, and often begins when social status as popularity becomes relevant. As children grow up in a world of aspirational marketing, young girls often want to seem older, like teenagers, so companies take advantage of this and create toys like barbies who look identical to the models on magazines. With this comes the pressure to adhere to certain stan-

dards. The pleasure we get from buying something now relies on how much others want it. This thought process becomes such a habit that we often don't realize it's there.

Research finds that tendencies toward materialism caused by insecurity begins at a young age. Lan Nguyen Chaplin (University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign) and Deborah Roedder John (University of Minnesota) conducted a study in the Journal of Consumer Research studied the self-esteem in different age groups and their correlation to materialism, which increases in early adolescence but decreases later when one nears adulthood.

"By the time children reach early adolescence, and experience a decline

in self-esteem, the stage is set for the use of material possessions as a coping strategy for feelings of low self-worth," they write.

In the study, children of different age groups made a collage of what made them happy on paper plates. Some children were given plates with positive comments about them from classmates. With the small change, there were no longer differences in materialism among different age groups.

"Simple actions to raise self-esteem among young consumers can have a dramatic impact on expressions of materialism," Chaplin and Roedder wrote.

Consumerism and insecurity are tied together. It's inevitable for us to be victims of the media which tells us we

should look a certain way. As women, we are supposed to adhere to a very specific type of sexiness. There's no clear answer as to whether or not we want to adhere to beauty standards for ourselves or others, as it's probably a mix of both. But, we do know that when we are concerned what others think, we want to buy more to gain approval.

We're all consumers. That will never change. But, as we consume, we need to be conscious of the unfair beauty standards being set by today's media. Deep insecurity will not go away, regardless of how someone's level of confidence. All we can do is try to take a step back as we shop, try to lose weight, or try to look a certain way and ask ourselves who we are doing these things for.

MIRROR MIRROR ON THE WALL, AM I EVEN BEAUTIFUL AT ALL?

A cultural look into beauty and how beauty is defined

by Ali Wood
OAKWOOD SECONDARY SCHOOL

As a mixed race child raised in Los Angeles, one of the preeminent beauty defining cities in the world, I have developed a complex idea of what beauty means. I have experienced first hand how two cultures can contradict the idea of true beauty. From the time I was a young girl, the question of what it meant to be beautiful was often on my mind.

Coming from a family that preached the importance of looking one's best, I was never sure which "one" I should be, Japanese or Australian, for both cultures have their own idea of what is truly beautiful. All cultures have their own manuals on how to become beautiful, but the true epitome of beauty is defined by the person staring back at you in the mirror.

I live with Japanese beauty products scattered around my house, each one adorned with a light skinned, wide eyed women with thick doll like hair.

I've sat with my mother as she lathers cream after cream on my face in the hopes of warding off undesired wrinkles and freckles. I receive gifts of whitening products from my mother's compatriots that I have been too scared to open. I come to school with extended eyelashes, longer than my own fake nails.

All these products are meant to make me the most beautiful Japanese woman I can be. This is the standard of beauty I have been exposed to and expected to uphold as a woman of Japanese descent. But I am not only a Japanese woman, I am an Australian one too.

The Australian women in my life praise the freckles that are sprinkled across my face. They embrace the color the sun gives them, even using tanning wipes to achieve the optimum sun kissed look. Lashes and nails are not of the utmost importance, but having nice white teeth and a nice beach body to

match are essential. These are the ideals for an Australian woman in my Aussie family's eyes.

But if the cultures that make up my genealogy have different ideas on what makes a woman beautiful, then what is true beauty?? This is the question I have pondered time and time again. The essence of beauty has always seemed to be found in a product, whether it was cream or a mask. But when you begin to pick apart products that seem to make us beautiful, you are just left with the product, not the answer to why you are not seemingly beautiful.

A cream does not determine if a woman is beautiful. Nor does the color of her skin or the lack or abundance of freckles on her face. Beauty is a cultural ideology that society has burdened women with as a requirement to achieve.

When you grow up with an inside

look on multiple nationalities as I have, you see the ways different countries define beauty based on their cultural standards and unique environments.

These definitions turn into expectations thanks to constant advertisement of products and the glamorous people who are paid to promote them.

And while beauty can be seen as an arbitrary standard enforced by the masses, it is hard to swim against the tide of the established ideal of beauty, such as a Barbie doll figure and a diminutive personality.

Being beautiful, cute, pretty, or hot has become essential for a woman. From the Princess Diary makeover to the Regina George effect, it is constantly being promoted in the media that to succeed, beauty is a must.

With teenagers especially, the idea that boys only go for the pretty girls has been promoted, evidenced by classic character types such as the ever popular cheerleader.

However, in recent years, the global ideas of beauty have evolved to include more types of women.

The 21st century has been a door opener for exposing different ideas of what constitutes beauty with movements such as #Plusis-equal which celebrates body positivity through models such as Ashley Graham, who was the first plus size model to grace the cover of the coveted Sports Illustrated Swimsuit issue.

More and more versions of beautiful are being highlighted in the media making beauty more diverse than it has ever been before.

But while there are more versions of beautiful in the world

today, the standards of cultural beauty are more demanding than ever.

Girls in Sierra Leone are going to extreme lengths to achieve light skin through bleaching while other girls in Europe and the United States are idolizing and trying to mimic perfect photo-shopped bodies that only a computer can achieve.

Gifts of plastic surgery are being given to young South Korean girls by their parents to fix their eyelids, noses, cheeks, and chins.

When considering national standards of beauty the idea of diversity is hard to embrace due to the fact that classic beauty has been established over generations, whether it is a Geisha with lily white skin or a Swede who covets blonde hair and big blue eyes.

But deviating from your nationali-

ty's idea of beautiful does not make you less beautiful in any sense.

With beauty being an opinion with no right answer, in theory anything and everything should be beautiful, right??

Formulating your own opinion on what is beautiful should be celebrated and accepted.

Beauty is defined by the individual's opinion, as I am fond of stating.

After years of being exposed to contrary beauty standards, I have come to learn to take things that make me feel beautiful, rather than subscribing to one culture or person's idea on what makes a woman beautiful. I wash my face with Japanese face soaps and creams.

I indulge a guilty pleasure by having eyelash extensions and fake, elaborate nails. I tan at the beach and smile when my summer freckles appear.

My freckled face does not make me less Japanese, nor do my extended eyelashes make me less Australian.

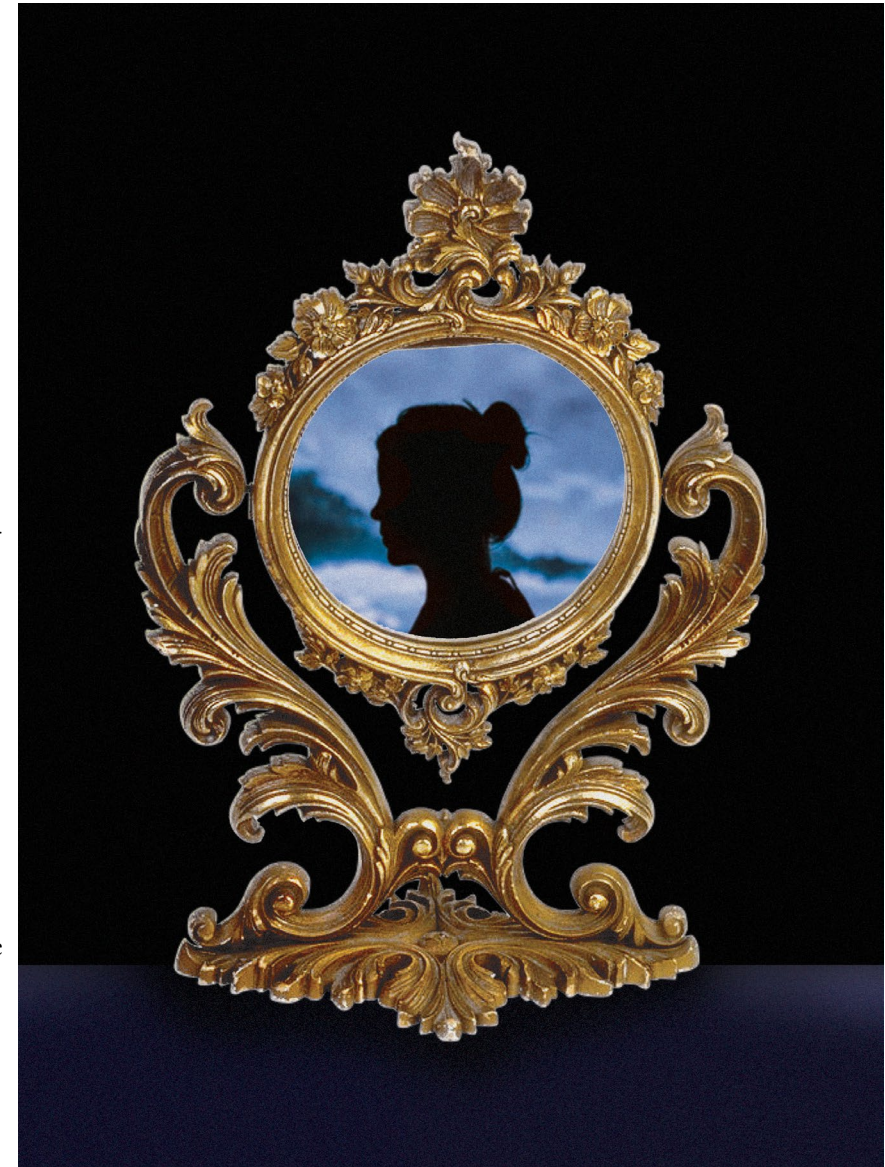
My opinion of what is beautiful does not compromise my cultural identity but re-enforces who I am.

Just because the popular view of beauty may seem ubiquitous it, does not make it correct.

What is beautiful should be an opinion that every girl should formulate for herself and while it may be difficult to appreciate what makes you shine, you are better off appreciating your own unique traits rather than being a slave to prejudiced societal standards.

There are no wrong ways to be beautiful.

Today, there are more ways than ever, just put your best foot forward.



THE BODY MASS INDEX

by Sophie Dorf-Kamienny
MARLBOROUGH SCHOOL

Almost anyone who has had an annual check-up, taken a high school health class, or applied for life insurance has come across those three little letters: BMI. The nightmare of any woman (or man) who struggles with their body image, which is, unfortunately, a large portion of the population.

Body Mass Index is a method used to judge the body fat and ultimately the health of a person in terms of their weight. The value is based on a specific calculation which involves dividing one's weight (in kilograms) by their height squared (in meters).

The concept of BMI was developed in the early 1800s by Belgian mathematician Lambert Adolphe Jacques Quetelet. However, many are unaware that it was designed only to judge the obesity of an entire population "to assist the government in allocating resources," according to NPR. Quetelet had clearly conveyed that the formula was simply incapable of designating whether an individual person was healthy or not.

So, you may be asking yourself, how is a 200 year old formula still being used for something that it wasn't even meant to be used for in the first place? The Center for Disease Control claims that using BMI for its modern purpose is prevalent because "it is inexpensive and easy to use for clinicians and for the general public."

Yes, accessibility for health-related resources is tremendously important, and many people lack such resources. Yet, however important it may be that solutions are found to this ubiquitous problem, there are instances where knowing nothing is better than knowing incorrect information.

For instance, biological science has provided evidence that if someone is lost at sea with no water, it is better to drink nothing than to drink the sea water

which they possess an abundance of. This is because seawater contains such a large amount of salt that the body will more quickly feel the need to expel it along with more water, and so one is left in a worse state than when they started.

The seawater in this example is comparable to the knowledge of one's BMI. The method of measurement is widespread and highly accepted in modern society because of its accessibility, and therefore many people do not hesitate to type their measurements into a calculator and wait for it to spit out a number.

However, they may not understand that doing so could leave them with a useless assessment that shatters their self esteem or gives them a false impression of the effects of their lifestyle, which can, in the long run, do more harm than good.

A prominent disadvantage to using BMI as an indicator of one's status is that ultimately, all that BMI will do is offer a number on a scale, rather than an understanding of the full complexity and ambiguity of each individual's body. In addition, doctors' offices will often dispense BMI measurements on charts that show one's percentile in terms of other people in the same age and gender group.

Imagine, for example, a class of students whose tests have been graded on a curve, and this letter grade is the only information they receive regarding their test results.

Rather than simply having feedback as to what they need to improve on and what their proficiency is in regards to the material, the students are simply left with a number which neither answers their questions, nor precisely indicates how much of the material they had mastered.

Instead, each student has a score that gives them no other choice than to

compare themselves to their classmates, without a full understanding of what their score consisted of. In the end, one feels pressured to make comparisons between apples and oranges, and you have no sense of what the issue is, or if there even is one. And even worse, one feels unnecessarily ashamed of his or herself, which is a feeling that society has made sure that women in particular are much too accustomed to.

It is important to address why BMI is untrustworthy and inaccurate, and there is no shortage of reasons. Here are just a few:

A) Height and weight can in no way encompass all of the details and complexities of the countless body types that exist. All people vary in regards to waist circumference, curves, and overall shape. Someone who is shorter but with a wider frame may be labeled as overweight or even obese simply because the BMI calculator will take their weight (which may be similar to that of a tall and slim person, although dissimilarly distributed throughout their body) and divide it by a smaller height squared. Therefore, you will be left with a higher BMI even if you are fit and healthy. In contrast, a tall and slim person could be labeled as underweight (which can be just as scary as obesity in some cases) because their weight is being divided by an increased height value.

A woman's breasts can also add to their BMI, even though one's breasts and one's height are not necessarily proportional. This can impair the body images of curvy women in particular.

In addition, BMI is harmful to the self esteem of adolescent girls who are evaluated by BMI percentile, even though doctors are well aware that girls' bodies can grow at drastically different rates.

Therefore, girls who develop curves

and breasts at a faster rate will be placed in an unproportionately high percentile simply because they are carrying more (completely healthy) body mass than girls who still have not reached puberty.

The CDC website judges child obesity by showing "how your child's weight compares to that of other children of the same age and sex.

For example, a BMI-for-age percentile of 65% means that the child's weight is greater than that of 65% of other children of the same age and sex."

Children are com-

pared on such a personal topic as they undergo an already difficult and trying process, and it is tremendously appalling that this system continues to be used in regards to young women.

B) Although BMI is said to measure one's body fat, the calculation has absolutely no method of distinguishing between fat and bone or muscle.

Therefore, some very muscular women are consistently being labeled as overweight, despite the fact that muscle is most often a positive indicator of physical health.

Additionally, bone density is not constant among different people, and so people with heavier bones are receiving higher BMI measurements for something that is often uncontrollable and harmless.

C) Too put it simply, health cannot be reduced to a number calculated by a



THAT'S JUST HARVEY

by Eunice Park
OAKWOOD SECONDARY SCHOOL

On October 5th, 2017, the New York Times released an expose of Harvey Weinstein titled "Harvey Weinstein Paid off Sexual Harassment Accuser for Decades."

The media reacted accordingly- blowing up with new articles, tweets, and interviews of stars who worked alongside Harvey and those who had heard of

program on a government website.

To say that the man who jotted down the formula 200 years ago would be able to address the weight of every type of person for the following centuries is simply absurd.

Even if the formula was completely accurate in computing body fat percentage, such a method is simply not the way to address a concept as personal and sensitive as an individual's health.

The people of the world didn't ask to be labeled with with little-to-no consideration for their emotions or worries. They are not inventory waiting to be taken stock of.

Health and a person's well-being can't be reduced to a number or percentage, yet BMI has and continues to be conveyed as able to do just that.

Despite these flaws that have always been engrained in the body

his behavior through others. Amongst the whirlwind of media attention, there were two clear narratives.

One. Harvey Weinstein was respected and feared. Film mogul and director of countless critically acclaimed features, Mr. Weinstein had an iron clasp on the movie industry sitting on top of his throne at Miramax entertainment.

Two. No one was surprised. Countless claims of sexual harassment smeared Harvey Weinstein's reputation in the film industry long before the New York Times article, and those who worked alongside him believed it was only a matter of time before he was exposed.

I had the opportunity to interview a close co worker of Harvey Weinstein, who worked in Miramax Entertainment

mass index system, it continues to be emphasized by physicians and even pediatricians. No wonder young women grow up in a culture of body shaming: it is deeply engrained in even the most intricate and progressive fields, such as that of medicine.

In addition, just as pre-existing conditions can raise prices for life or health insurance, so can a BMI that falls outside of the healthy range.

Evidently, the absurdities of BMI cannot just be ignored, as they can affect someone in a more tangible and financially-straining way as well.

It is crucial that the body mass index measurement system is eased out of use, so that we can prevent the emotional trauma and worry that comes with it.

We each deserve to be treated with thought, consideration, and dignity, and we should not let the body mass index take that away from anyone simply for the sake of

for decades alongside Harvey's important projects.

During her time working as an assistant in the 90s, Miramax Entertainment was the "ultimate status symbol." "It was one of the hottest companies (in the movie industry)" at that time, and thus, its workers felt pressured to push the boundaries of what they would tolerate at that company.

With Harvey Weinstein, workers had to tolerate his antics daily.

He was “rude and demanding—mostly to people who were inferior”, she states, describing Harvey’s abusive behavior as an “ongoing, daily thing.”

When he was in a bad mood, his co workers would whisper to one another to “watch out” for Harvey, “the loose cannon”. Even when Harvey was in a good mood, he was still very vicious.

He would unnecessarily bully all his co workers to get his way.

When his co workers realized the immense power he had, they were forced to attempt to rationalize his aggression and bad temper with the saying:

"THAT'S JUST HARVEY."

What made her most uncomfortable about Harvey Weinstein was what she had heard from Rose Mc Gowan, actress of movie *Scream*.

Working alongside Harvey Weinstein, Rose Mc Gowan confided in her that Harvey would frequently make her uncomfortable with his advances,



many of which contained sexual overtures. Unfortunately, she states that her younger self was “not brave enough, nor as aware of accountability” at that time to report such behavior to her superiors.

However, she is inspired by the recent turn of events that have brought these issues to light.

FRANCE MINISTER CRACKS DOWN ON STREET HARRASSMENT

by Charlotte Kramon
OAKWOOD SECONDARY SCHOOL

Marlène Schiappa, France’s gender equality minister, is focusing on a bill censoring and eliminating street harassment.

The type of behavior Schiappa hopes to prevent involves men constantly following women, making inappropriate remarks, and repeatedly asking for their number.

She says this behavior puts women in uncomfortable situations in their everyday lives when they

leave their homes to go to buses or work.

Schiappa and Macron are working on a taskforce of politicians defining what constitutes as sexual and street harassment and what makes it illegal.

France is following in the footsteps of Argentina and Portugal, who also made street harassment illegal.

After allegations against Harvey Weinstein and other sexual offenders, conversations about the issue of sexual and street harassment in France. President Emmanuel Macron is taking his Legion D’Honneur award in lieu of the allegations.

Schiappa has been an active advocate of gender equality. As deputy mayor of the city of Le Mans, she set up a network of working mothers.

Schiappa says she has received opposition to the bill from men who are “afraid we are forbidding

She believes that although “things have not changed that much in Hollywood for women, what has changed is the dialogue.”

Sexual harassment, instead of being accepted and even encouraged, is now increasingly talked about and is no longer acceptable in the workplace.

For any young girls wishing to become involved in the movie industry, she states that the best piece of advice she can give is to “be brave”. “Don’t be deterred by men like Harvey Weinstein.”

Instead, be “educated and empowered,” and most importantly, brave, to report these issues of sexual harassment and inappropriate workplace behavior as they occur.

Yes, Harvey Weinstein was respected and feared. Yes, no one was surprised when they heard of allegations against him.

However, with each voice speaking out against Harvey Weinstein, the narrative against sexual harassment and inappropriate behavior in the workplace becomes louder and louder, until finally, the excuse “that’s just harvey” is not valid any longer.

them to talk to women.” In response to this, she said that “it’s really important to have that debate,” and while it’s ok for men to talk to women, there is a difference between talking and harassment.

The bill would also make it easier for children to make police complaints about sexual assault and will toughen laws on sex with minors in general.

In an interview with RTL, Schiappa said the bill was “completely necessary because at the moment street harassment is not defined in the law... We can’t currently make a complaint.”

As women are coming forward with their experiences with sexual assault, the conversation is spreading to Europe where countries are cracking down on harassment.

TWO THOUGHT EXPERIMENTS ON ABORTION

by Joseph Ha
OAKWOOD SECONDARY SCHOOL

While there are many opinions in the abortion debate, it is clear that there are two positions: pro-life or pro-choice. These two positions tend to be misunderstood, so it is essential that everyone should get a clear picture on what these positions are arguing for. Since this is just a short article, not every argument from both sides of the debate can be discussed.

However, we will cover the basic contentions that these sides are using. For the sake of simplicity, these arguments will be illustrated through two thought experiments.

Additionally, it is understandable that there will be objections to the premises and conclusions of these thought experiments, but the purpose of this article is to create discussion, not to give an answer for the abortion debate.

The first thought experiment is from philosopher Judith Jarvis Thomson in her essay, “A Defense of Abortion.” In her paper, Thomson asks the reader to imagine the following scenario:

“You wake up in the morning and find yourself back to back in bed with an unconscious violinist.

A famous unconscious violinist. He has been found to have a fatal kidney ailment, and the Society of Music Lovers has canvassed all the available medical records and found that you alone have the right blood type to help. They have therefore kidnapped you, and last night the violinist’s circulatory system was plugged into yours, so that your kidneys can be used to extract poisons from his blood as well as your own.”¹

And there’s a catch. As it turns out, you are to be plugged with the violinist for nine months.

After that, he will be fully recovered and then you will be unplugged. It is obvious that this hypothetical situation is an analogy for a woman in pregnancy.

Yet, there are important questions raised here.

Thomson makes it clear in her paper that although she does not disregard a fetus’s right to life, she is advocating for women’s rights to their bodies as she illustrates the injustice of allowing a woman to keep a baby that she clearly did not intend to have.

After all, while the fetus has the right to life, the fetus does not have the right to use the body of its mother. However, as with any thought experiment, there are objections to Thomson’s deduction that her thought experiments allows the permissibility of abortion.



One objection is that Thomson’s scenario only allows for abortion due to pregnancy from rape. In this situation, the subject was forced against his or her will to be connected to the violinist, yet women sometimes get unplanned pregnancies from voluntary intercourse.

So does that mean that Thomson’s experiment limits the permissibility of abortion? That is up to you to decide. The second thought experiment is an ancient Greek paradox called the Sorites Paradox, but was applied to the abortion debate by philosophers Lee F. Kerckhove and Sara Waller. For those who have no prior knowledge on what the Sorites Paradox is, it is basically a paradox that outlines a scenario like this:

- 1,000,000 grains of sand is a heap.
- Removing only one grain of sand

will not have an effect on whether the remaining aggregate of grains is still a heap.

3. Therefore, 999,999 grains of sand is a heap.

4. Repeat steps (2)–(3).²

So the question that arises from this is whether or not a grain of sand is still a heap? Or, when is a heap of sand not considered a heap of sand? The genius of Kerckhove and Waller’s application of the Sorites Paradox to the abortion debate is that it brings up the question on when a fetus is considered a person. Although Kerckhove and Waller do not support the pro-life position, their application of the Sorites Paradox can certainly be used by pro-life advocates. As a grain of sand can become a heap when more grains of sand are added, so can a cell become into a fully fledged human being when more cells are added. Therefore abortion should not be allowed because even though abortion does not necessarily kill the fetus, it still prevents it from becoming a person.

However, there is an ambiguity for when a fetus should be considered a person. There is an obvious contrast with the cells that make the fetus and the fetus itself. But during conception, the fetus is at a stage where it is not exactly considered a human, but it is not simply cells either. So, should be the fetus be considered a person at this stage? Or is it still a non-person? Perhaps there is no ambiguity.

1. Thomson, Judith Jarvis. “A Defense of Abortion.” *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1971, pp. 47–66. JSTOR, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/2265091.

2. F. Kerckhove, Lee & Waller, Sara. (1998). Fetal Personhood and the Sorites Paradox. *The Journal of value inquiry*. 32. 175-89.

TAKING BACK CONTROL

Interview with a Reproductive Justice Activist

by Charlotte Kramon & Eunice Park
OAKWOOD SECONDARY SCHOOL



Brittany Brathwaite remembers a key moment that changed her life forever. It was her junior year of high school. She was walking along the route she always took to get home after school, when all of a sudden, she noticed a van out of the ordinary parked along the road. The van advertised itself as a mobile testing unit, and when she entered it curiously she was stunned. Ms. Brathwaite entered the van having little to no knowledge of sexual education, and exited it armed with vital information and a free HIV test.

It was this moment that Ms. Brathwaite was inspired to become involved in reproductive justice. Reproductive justice is, as Ms. Brathwaite describes, “the intersection between reproductive rights and social justice”, or more personally, activism that “removes barriers and creates opportunities for people to live their best lives.” When she was a junior in high school, she was angry at how she was “robbed of vital (sexual education) information.” She remembers this feeling of anger persisting throughout her early education, especially as she had gone to catholic primary schools where the topic of sex was taboo.

Thus, when Ms. Brathwaite entered college, she seized all opportunities she could to manifest her interest in reproductive justice.

She became heavily involved in Advocates for Youth and the Women of Color Leadership Council, both intersectional organizations that worked to destigmatize sex and promote peer to peer sexual education engagement. Before college, Ms. Brathwaite believed she “didn’t have control over (her) body, (she) didn’t have control over (her) life.” But after college, armed with new knowledge of reproductive justice and a supportive community, she began to take control over her body, and ultimately,

her life again.

As she became empowered to control her own body, she quickly realized that in the context of reproductive justice, there were so many communities that did not have the same privilege and were being ignored. “Reproductive justice focuses on people at the margin to reach all the people who are censored.”

Although Ms. Brathwaite was supportive of the fundamental ideas of many feminist media broadcasters, she felt like women of color, who are disproportionately affected and consequently ignored, were not fairly represented in social issues. In fact, in some instances, the oppression of women of color is almost celebrated, as in the case of the larger than life statue of J Marion Sims displayed in New York City. J Marion

Sims was undoubtedly an important researcher in gynecology. However, all his research conclusions were reached through operating on a young, fully conscious, black teenage girl. “He was just cutting into her uterus and vagina”, she states. Currently, Ms. Brathwaite is working with the Black Youth Project and other city organizations to fight for the removal of the statue.

Such misrepresentation and underrepresentation is what reproductive justice aims to put a spotlight on. Although there is a lot of media attention dedicated to the topic of abortion, Ms. Brathwaite states that there needs to be more attention to broader topics, as “the question is who has access to abortion” if we’re “including trans and gender nonconforming folks” in the dialogue. A reproductive justice organization she recommends donating to is Sister Song, an intersectional, inclusive organization promoting wellness.

Although Ms. Brathwaite hopes for there to be more support for reproductive justice, she recognizes the reality of the political divide standing as an

obstacle for women’s rights today. She recounts some of her most frustrating moments in activism, as she states that “(she) was at a point where (she) was ready to walk away because people were saying things to my face that threatened my life.”

Some of her most difficult moments have been attempting to reason with others who completely disregard her identity and personal story, yet she has found an incredible community of support with other women who identify with her.

Her strategy to work across the aisle is to “get people in the middle who don’t know or don’t have enough education” to support her beliefs. She has learned to enjoy success in the small victories, whether that meant convincing one more person of her beliefs or encouraging a previously apathetic friend to advocate for reproductive justice in their own home community. She is continually inspired by her ancestors, as what keeps her going every single day is the fact that previous activists “believed in (their work) enough so that I’m alive”. She will never live long enough to see the end of racism, and the effects of her activism are far from instant. However, her advocacy is worth it, as it paves a better future for generations down the line.

As a message to youth everywhere, Ms. Brathwaite states that “young folks are leaders now.” She believes that, especially for girls, somewhere down in the line in high school, “something happens that makes you feel insignificant.”

However, the best piece of advice Ms. Brathwaite can give is to “believe in infinite possibilities.” She encourages everyone to constantly fight for reproductive justice or other issues they are passionate about, as “the largest form of oppression is the inability to imagine something different.”

TRUMP'S EFFECT ON AMERICAN YOUTH

by Alyse Rovner
OAKWOOD SECONDARY SCHOOL

In a recent study done by the Southern Poverty Law Center, they analyzed over 25,000 responses from a survey conducted about the effects of Trump’s presidency on the youth of America.

The study conducted found that after the election of President Trump, the numbers hate crimes such as including vandalism or graffiti in schools targeting black, Muslim, Jewish, and LGBTQ+, etc. students have been very high.

The study released first hand responses from school administrators and teachers to show the ways the presidency affected their personal students. Here are of some accounts mentioned from the study:

“A high school counselor from Arizona, talks about students lifting a confederate flag during a school wide assembly.”

“Another teacher in Oregon saw an increase in racist and sexist jokes, along with graffiti of swastikas and symbols of the KKK in the boy’s bathroom.”

“A high school teacher from Washington State overheard students chanting “White power” and saw swastikas appearing all over the school.”

These accounts do not not stop

here. Whether it be chanting of “build a wall” or telling students to go back to Mexico or Africa, NBC reports that hate crimes have gone up a full 20% since the election.

It’s not hard to question if this is the result of the behavior the president has approved of, such as the sexualization and objectification of women through his “locker room banter”, the way Trump’s motto, “Build a Wall” has fueled negativity to immigrant populations, and through the ways he has avoided condemning white supremacy.

President Trump has made it clear that he wants a white version of America, because many like him, feel threatened by the prospects of losing their “hard earned power.”

In Michael Kimmel’s book *Angry White Men*, he acknowledges that many white middle class men are angry because they are losing the power they have been “entitled” to.

These men were taught that if they got a job and were able to support a family, they should get the same advantages their grandfathers before them got.

Their feelings of anger are valid because everything they have ever known

is changing; however, their feelings have no respect towards those who have lived their whole life never being able to attain the advantages these men have.

The hatred fueled by some of President Trump’s supporters and white supremacists have made its way to the children of those supporters.

This can be seen through the study done above by the Southern Poverty Law Center, that addresses hate crimes in schools post election. The study shows the effects the president’s actions have on our younger generations, because of the hateful and derogatory ideals President Trump supports and promotes. These derogatory ideals cater to the needs of an Alt-right and part of the conservative audience.

The article focuses on the negative effects of Trump’s presidency, not the argument that children have become more motivated to stand up.

However, it is necessary to tell the side of the story where hate crimes and vandalism are being tolerated and seen throughout schools nation wide so we can see the direct effect of our Presidents ideals that imitate those of a bully have on the youth of America.



INTERVIEW WITH *Emine Bozkurt*

by Eunice Park
OAKWOOD SECONDARY SCHOOL

Emine Bozkurt is an advisor for the International Institution for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA). A former parliament member of the European Union, Ms. Bozkurt has extensive experience in politics. Throughout her 10 years in the European parliament, Ms. Bozkurt was a passionate advocate for immigration rights, women's issues, and human rights. Currently, she is working to support emerging democracies and various human rights campaigns across the world.

I recently had the honor to interview Emine Bozkurt about her political experiences and advocacy. Although she initially had no prior plans to get involved in politics, she was inspired to become involved in politics after she realized that real change would not result until individuals stepped up. "Civic participation is not only a right, but also a duty", she stated. She went on to explain how there has been a growing culture of political apathy, and the only way to combat such a culture was to educate the youth. Currently, she is working with the IDEA organization to develop specific programs that invest in the youth to provide civic education and volunteer opportunities for different communities.

Throughout her political career,

one of the biggest lessons she learned was to work across the aisle and respect diverse perspectives. This empathy and open mindedness were instrumental to the success of improving women's rights in Turkey, one of her most memorable projects she worked on during her career.



Even if many countries were opposed to the European Union providing humanitarian and social aid to Turkey, Ms. Bozkurt continuously advocated for the European Union to step up its funding for Turkey, especially for Turkey's marginalized women. Noticing that previous legislation did not have any specific policies geared toward supporting Turkish women, Ms. Bozkurt successfully fought for the creation of domestic violence shelters and legisla-

tion against violent practices against women such as honor killing bans.

The primary reason for her legislation's success was her willingness to work with different countries and government leaders with critical perspectives to gain their support after constructive conversation. "My approach has always been a balance", Ms. Bozkurt explains, justifying why she believes different opinions enrich understanding to reach a well informed agreement.

When asked about her advocacy for other marginalized groups, Ms. Bozkurt was quick to correct that she does not fight for the rights of specific groups, but rather human rights. "Women's rights are human rights. Muslim rights are human rights." Ms. Bozkurt stated, emphasizing how different groups are oppressed and deprived of basic human rights. Coming from a Muslim family, she took on her knowledge about the Islam faith and passion for the Muslim community to fight discrimination against Muslim communities in Sweden, Belgium, the Netherlands, United Kingdom, Bulgaria and Spain. However, she notes that despite her personal connection with Islam, everyone- "Christians, Muslims, Catholics, atheists, etc" should be invested in fighting discrimination without "religion bashing".

INTERSECTIONALITY IS HUMAN

Fiorella Murillo
OAKWOOD SECONDARY SCHOOL

There has been a lot of talk about intersectionality around the news and the world trying to accept people that are different from what the media has portrayed as beautiful for many years. However, what is intersectionality to

begin with?

Humans are not one-dimensional. This is one of the major qualities that makes us more evolved or different than all of the Earth's animals. We are made up of different identities such as gender,

sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, body type and so many different things coming together in many different ways.

Humans are incredibly complex and society forcing people into boxes and labels just isn't cutting it anymore, so intersectionality allows for a person to identify as many ways as they'd like to

and still be considered and treated as a human or person no matter what.

The stereotype typically set for a Latina women is usually portrayed as incredibly curvy but thin with big breasts, a big bottom, and they usually play a maid or mistress in TV shows.

In America, models that many young girls look at and take fashion advice from are typically perfectly bronzed, extremely thin girls.

At least one-third of American models have admitted to having an eating disorder at one point due to the fact that there are no medical standards for being a model.

In fact, most models are clinically underweight and could be facing serious medical problems in the future.

In France the the entertainment industry is taking a step forward by banning extremely thin models from the industry to prevent unrealistic standards from being presented to the public.

They just passed a law stating that models must present a doctor's note

stating that their BMI (body mass index) is a healthy number in order to be recognized as a model in France.

This was passed in an effort to fight eating disorders and other mental health issues regarding body type.

In addition to that, any pictures that are photoshopped or otherwise edited must carry a warning label if it is to be used. It is not a secret that models on international magazines are sometimes edited to appear "perfect."

Young girls understandably aspire to become like the models shown in magazines and on TV.

At one point or another most people

admit to being self conscious about one or more parts of their bodies. This could be one of our many intersecting identities. We all have something that makes us feel or has made us feel uncomfortable.

We also all also have different characteristics that make us feel confident in who we are as people. Someone could be a musician but also be a woman or an engineer, and these three things are completely different but they come together to make up a person's identity.

Every person has a different body type and being comfortable in my own body and skin is one of the constant battles I face. It's a matter of progress, but slowly I have begun to realize that I and everyone around me is more than the size of clothing they use.

The world is slowly beginning to understand that everybody's body should be loved and appreciated equally and that we as humans are more than just how we look in pictures.

We are the books we read, the questions we have, and the knowledge we seek. We are everything we want ourselves to be and we can identify with as many things as we want.

The most important thing is that we recognize that male or not, athlete or not, musician or not, we are all human and should be treated as such.

ASSIMILATION THROUGH YOUR HAIRSTYLE

by Sophie Friedberg
PALISADES HIGH SCHOOL

As seen throughout history, humans have a difficult time wrapping their brains around the concept of cultural appropriation versus cultural assimilation.

The line between these two terms often becomes blurred, and as a result, we act in a "grey area" of what we as humans believe is acceptable. As time goes on, this line becomes more and more obscured, proving almost impossible to truly comprehend what is respectful, and what is insensitive.

To begin, it would be helpful to know the definition of these two concepts.

According to the Oxford Reference, cultural appropriation is "a term used

to describe the taking over of creative or artistic forms, themes, or practices by one cultural group from another." This is very different from "adaptation" or "cultural blending".

Cultural appropriation is the blatant stealing of another culture's practices, and claiming them for your own without truly understanding the historical or cultural background of the practices you've adopted.

On the other hand, the Merriam Webster Dictionary says that cultural assimilation is "the process through which individuals and groups of differing heritages acquire the basic habits, attitudes, and mode of life of an embracing culture." The key word in this

definition is "embracing". To embrace is to accept, and to understand; and in this case, it refers to the acceptance and understanding of a culture other than your own. This is extremely different from the careless burglary of another culture's mannerisms.

A large way in which these two concepts are demonstrated in society today is through hairstyles. Something as minor and careless as a hairstyle may seem, is actually extremely important in the way a culture presents itself.

Certain cultures view their hair as a representation of who they are and where they came from. Because many people can overlook the meaningful nature behind a hairstyle, it can lead to

people, as I've previously stated, to act in a "grey area"

What I mean by a "grey area" is one who understands inclusivity and acceptance, but is unable to differentiate between adaptation and stealing. For example, there have been far too many cases of people being told they should adapt to the hairstyle that is expected in an American society, for the purpose of "blending in".

There have also been many times where people have styled their hair to

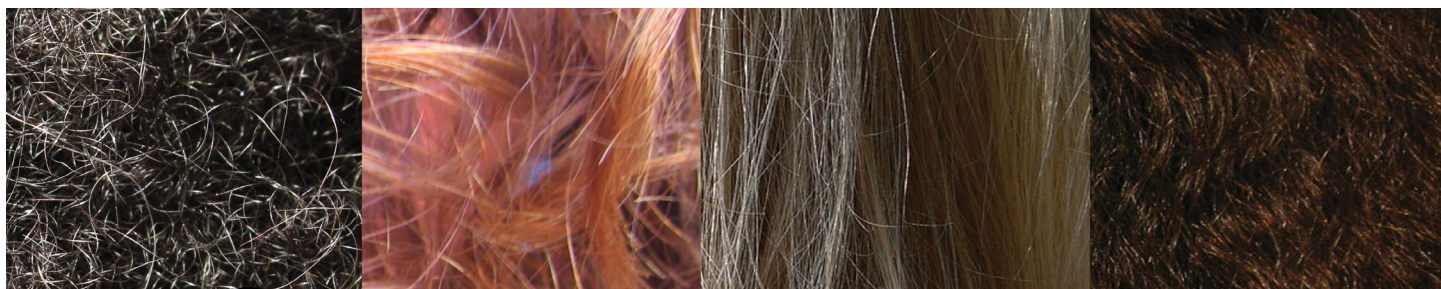
model another culture's personal style, without truly understanding the cultural significance of the style they've adopted.

This reinforces the stigma that in order to be "accepted" in America, one must alter their appearance or lifestyle to that of the dominant racial group. This is where cultural appropriation is introduced. Now one feels obligated to adjust the way she/he looks in order to fit into societal standards.

On a similar note, a member of a majority can not only wear and steal the

style of another group, but be praised for it. This is an example of someone subconsciously acting in the grey area of what is acceptable, and what is not.

As humans, we believe in individuality and the freedom of expression. Yet to abide by the previous statement, one must be educated on the connotation of the expression. As a society, we must be advocates for acceptance- because America is a place of constant change. With change, comes diversity- and within diversity, there is strength.



THE RATING GAME

by Anonymous
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I am a growing girl in this world, and there are many other growing girls around me. Not only are we growing physically, but we are growing mentally. This means that our personalities, knowledge, and bodies are changing. It is a hard experience growing up when other kids your age pressure you to look a certain way. It is tough to change yourself as a person on the inside, when many of people surrounding you only care about the outside. That is the exact feeling I felt, and many other girls in my grade felt when we found out that boys in our class were "rating" us.

Rating means that

boys were giving girls numbers based on their looks. They were rating girls based on how pretty they were. Boys would rate girls behind their backs, and they would even rate girls to their faces. There are many questions you could ask about this topic, but the one I am going to focus on in this article is, Why did they do this? What made these boys want to rate girls?

One girl in seventh grade said that rating girls was "awful and girls shouldn't be treated like objects." This leads to one reason that boys were doing this. They wanted to treat us as something less than them, and treat us like we are below them. It is not ok that those boys felt that by making comments about girls' looks, they were more important than us. This is where the issue of gender inequality comes in.

Gender inequality is a huge issue worldwide, and when young boys see it happening around them, they feel an urge to repeat it. That transitions to

the next reason that boys are doing this. When boys hear powerful, important men in the world making comments about women, it influences them to do the same. These twelve and thirteen year old boys are growing up, and they look up to these men with power, and when they make comments about women, they want to repeat that behavior. This shows how the actions of influential people around us can have a big effect on younger kids and teenagers.

Many girls in my class have told me that what was happening in our grade is very hurtful, and made them feel judged and insecure. It is hard to be a girl who is still maturing in this world, but to have boys chiming in on how girls are growing makes them feel uncomfortable with who they are. This not only is an issue in my class, it is an issue in many other schools and grades, too. Girls shouldn't be given a number based on what they look like.

Girls need to work together to fight against this tough situation. Even though it is frustrating, it is not unstoppable. Just as young women in the past have stood up for themselves, we need to continue to do so today. Situations like this will continue to affect girls all around the world, but we are strong, and we can get through it.

