

The Uncertainty Principle

Issue One
"Women"

December 13th, 2009



page two

The Uncertainty Principle

1,000 word essays and art on one subject every two months.

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Issue One

Women

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About

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Notes

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* Charles Jeffrey Danoff's essay was graciously edited by Nathan Krishnamurthy.

Colophon

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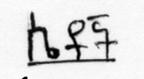
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The writer of this article is Tigist Defaru, an Ethiopian. She is an English teacher in China. The following article shows her personal view of what the culture she is raised in considers as the essence of a woman, and how this value is taken for granted. Any person who speaks the language she speaks and can read the scripts she writes in, is more than welcome to send his/her comment or criticism through her email - akewnini@google.com

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Tommy Tank Dictionary

Tommy Tank - A person hailing from the United States of America.

Nappy - Diaper.

Sheffield - A beautiful city in the north of England surrounded by trees and Power Plants.

Boyzone - Horrific boy-band that have long since split. The split was an act of public service.

Football - Soccer, but the only sport that merits the name 'Football' because you actually play it with your feet not just to score a field goal.
West Ham United top - Specific football (not American Football....damn it!!) jersey.

Your first love.....

Guys, who remembers the first time they truly set eyes on the opposite sex. The first time they gazed longingly towards a woman, girl, cartoon without really knowing why. A sigh, a deep breath and then back to reality, which if you were an early starter was throwing sand at another child or rocks at girls as retaliation to them wearing a 'boys are stupid throw rocks at them T-shirt' or even riding out of playgroup on your pimped out peddle motorbike. Maybe you were a late developer and stumbled out of your bosses office spilling coffee all over her brand new white carpet, cussing yourself under your breath as you scurry away into your cubbyhole, or are so taken by a woman that you neglect to look where you are going and , ooops, that's a lamppost!!

Regardless of the age, apart from the very few of us born with the cool gene imprinted across our entire genome, most of us stumble, fumble and dribble are way through our first 'real' encounter of those aliens from Venus. And at that point guys, we do view them as alien. They may be our friend one moment, but as soon as the boundary is crossed it all goes Pete Tong! Once we begin to look at that special girl as exactly that, special, everything changes including co-ordination, language ability and common sense. Apparently it's a good sign if, as children, we bash each other like 'Bamb Bamb' from the Flintstones. Yep....common sense, running dive out of a seventh floor window.

It seems that as boys we believe that the way to a girls heart is to humiliate them ritually. We are practically subliminally told this from birth. I think the first time I ever humiliated a girl was when, as a one year old baby, I was obviously bursting (toilet). Lying on my back, apparently, I sent arcs of urine high into the sky and straight onto her face whilst her nappy was being changed. Yes, I got my first humiliation as early as that! Shame. Chalk one for me. Top of the tots....

So, everybody remembers their first love. I am sorry ladies, but giggles and butterflies don't really compare to the torment us boys/men put ourselves through every time we meet somebody we like. Remember what happened when you told your friends?...Oh yes, Yes! Tortured for ever more. Again my comments do not include those James Dean/Barry White like personalities that have only smoothness and a wide gait!! I remember the first time I met my first love/crush/Venusian. I was 14 years old and heading to a 'Boyzone' concert for my cousin's birthday. She had invited us to attend. NO, no, no, I did not go there to watch 'Boyzone' before you ask. I was a boy interested in football, and well football. Watching a boy-band croon was NOT my idea of a 'beast' time, to use vernacular of my youth. But, I did like to spend time travelling, so, a day trip to Sheffield was an exciting opportunity. Supposedly.... For all you Tommy Tanks that is like living in New York and wanting to travel to New Jersey for your vacation. Pointless!! As it goes, it turned out to be one of my more memorable days. Not only did I meet the girl who I believed I would marry, but also glimpsed my first Rastafarian festival. Which was awesome!

The girl, a beautiful creation of mixed heritage, had a black Caribbean father and white British mother. As she exited her mother's car, at my cousin's house, I stopped dead in my track. My first UFO encounter. What was this thing? This stunning intergalactic traveller? This Greek goddess from the stars? Had I found Dante Alighieri's modern day Beatrice or Troy's Helena here to destroy any limited intelligible capacities I had as a young boy on the throws of manhood? I was entranced, and the journey to Sheffield was one which will hold in my memory as enchanted. OK, so, it was just a car journey, but you get the picture. Listen, if C.S. Lewis can find fantasy in a wardrobe I believe I am entitled enchantment in an automobile. And as we exited the car in a very quaint picnic spot, there she stood. Giggling, not entirely aware of my existence. Different in every aspect too any girl I had ever met.

She was beautiful, and to admit that to myself at 14 was difficult. I think I made parallels with the Brazilian football team! Often described as sexy, entertaining and vibrant. I would have settled for cool, awesome or 'beast'. My vocabulary was limited at that age, mostly grunts and yawns that my friends seemed to comprehend fully, and confuse the hell out of any adult listening. Teenagers....

After a day of bashful communication, an ending in which I mentioned that 'Boyzone' were sh** (in my humble teenage opinion) and she cried, I was totally and utterly besotted. Do I think she would have thrown rocks at the stupid boy, if any were available? Yes.

Fast forward 5 years. I have had my first 'real' girlfriend. I have had bunny like adult experience and am still a year and a bit from exiting my teenage years. In a fit of madness, I decided to call the girl and ask her out on a date. I turned up in a West Ham United top. We dated for 4 and a half years on and off. And far from being my Helena or Beatrice she became my Lilith. So, Lilith was my first love and I remember her well. Even now after a number of years thinking about her my stomach decides to leap around as though I am riding a roller-coaster. On the other hand, this could be the result of a dodgy kebab I ate last night.

The article is all about respecting and valuing woman in our society.
Aglu M. Cayetano - ESL Teacher

Iba Ka Babae

Bilang pagbibigay halaga sa nakaraan, ang buhay ng mga babae sa lipunan noon ay hindi kailan ma'y nangingibabaw sa buhay ng mga lalake. Noong unang panahon sa bansang Pilipinas, ang mga babae ay tanging taong bahay lamang. Sila ang mga taong nagpapalakad ng buhay sa bahay. Hindi sila maaaring magtrabaho sa labas ng bahay dahil sa kanilang pisikal na kakayanan at sa kanilang halaga sa kanilang mga anak. Tanging ang mga lalake lamang ang siyang maaaring magtrabaho o magsusumikap upang maitawid ang kanilang pamilya sa banta ng gutom at kahirapan.

Sa panahon ngayon, ay hayagang makikita sa bansang Pilipinas na ang mga babae ay hindi lamang taong bahay kundi maaari din maging taong opisina at maging lider sa isang organisasyon. Ang mga babae ngayon ay hindi lamang mga empleyado sa opisina kundi kahit anong larangan ng kasikatan ay pinasok na rin upang maipakita ang kanilang talino't galing at nang maiwagayway ang bandila ng kababaehan.

Dating pangulong Corazon C. Aquino at ang kasalukoyang pangulo ng bansa Gng.Gloria M. Arroyo ay ang mga babaeng naging pangulo ng bansa. Taas noo nilang ipinakita sa mundo ang kakayanan ng mga babae na maging ina hindi lamang sa pamilya kundi sa buong bansa. Higit pa riyon ay hindi lamang naging ordinaryong pangulo ng bansa dahil mayron din silang mga pinanghahawakang posisyon sa kontenete ng Asia o sa isang pandaigdigang organisasyon.

Ano nga ba ang halaga ng babae? Batay sa aking malalim na pagninilay ay aking nabatid na ang mga babae ay siyang pinaka importanting tao sa mundo. Bawat dagdag ng papulasyon ay isinisilang ng mga babae. Sila ang pinanggagalingan ng bawat hininga ng bawat tao sa mundo. Ang mga babae ay siyang may pinaka sensitibong uri ng buhay kaya dapat sila'y ingatan ng maayos. Ang mga babae ay respituhin at tratuhin ng pantay-pantay sa loob at labas ng lipunan. Bawat tao sa mundo ay may kanya kanyang responsibilidad sa lipunan ngunit ang mga babae ay siyang may pinaka sensitibong papel na ginagampanan hindi lamang sa loob ng opisina ngunit higit sa lahat sa pamilya. Ayon sa aking agam-agam, kadalasan ng mga babae ay siyang madaling makinig sa ano mang problema sa lipunan dahil sa kanilang maka emosyonal na bahagi ng buhay. Ang buhay ng mga babae ay parang isang salamin, magaling mag bigay-galang pag sila'y iyong iginalang.

Ang mga babae tulad ng mga ina ay napakahalaga sa lipunan dahil sila ang siyang humuhubog sa mga taong naiiwan sa bahay. Humuhubog sa mga mosmos na bukas makalawa ay makikisalamuha sa magpagbiro at magplinlang na lipunan. Tulad ng aking ina, siya ang nagsusumikap na ako'y turuan hindi lamang sa larangan ng kaalaman sa paaralan ngunit higit sa lahat sa bawat asal na aking dinadala sa aking pagkatao. AKO ITO dahil sa babae sa aking buhay, ang aking ina.

Sa kabuuan, bawat babae sa lipunan ay dapat bigyang halaga dahil sa kanilang taglay na kagalingan hindi lamang sa pagdadalang tao kundi sa paghubog ng pagkatao ng isang ganap na tao. Sila ang tumatayong sandigan lalong lalo na sa emosyonal na bahagi ng buhay ng bawat nilalang. Bawa respetong inilaan sa bawat babae ay may kapalit na dalawa o higit pa nito mula sa kanila. Mabuhay kayong mga babae sa piling ng mga mababait na lalake.

Modern Woman

A while back, I was asked to write for a friend's first internet publication namely this '*The Uncertainty Principle*'. I was given the initial subject 'woman' and asked to write an article from any angle I liked.

After a few weeks of redundant thinking and dead end attempts I decided to bastardise my thought process and resort to a google search. Whilst scrolling through endless tripe I came across the phrase 'modern woman'. I asked myself what the term meant? I also wondered what other people thought the phrase meant? Back to google, I delved, looking for people's opinion's. In the end I decided, after a bolt of lightning, to ask people I knew. As the world is now a global village, I could find the unique perspectives I was looking for on my doorstep and then contrast these views with my own.

I believe that 'modern woman' refers to the female within the West (as this is where my experience lies) and her relatively new found role in a patriarchal dominated society. Meaning simply that women have more options and avenues in which to follow individual desire as opposed to the hegemonic notion that marriage, child bearing and homemaking are solitary occupations to which they can abide in modern society. In this society women can be career minded if this is their desire, a homemaker if again this is their goal. It would seem that almost endless possibilities abound for the courageous woman that intends to take on a world filled and dominated by patriarchal thought and ritual. If I am to consider singular words to describe this phrase they are 'liberation', 'independence', and 'strength'. I use the word 'liberation' rather than 'liberated' because I believe that masculine thought and dominance is intrinsically woven in current society. And that true forms of equality are yet to appear. Having thought about what the term means to myself I decided to turn to others for their opinions.

I decided the best way in which to get an informative answer from each of my chosen core was to ask for a paragraph about the individuals perception of the meaning of 'modern woman'. I contacted various female friends and acquaintances to ascertain their thoughts and feelings on the subject. What perceptions would these individuals have?

Some of the descriptions received read as follows;

'[A 'modern woman'] can have a career without the worry of finding a man to support her financially.'

'A modern woman is determined to prove people, who say 'it is too much for you, remember you are a woman', wrong and show them her real value.'

'Strong. Assertive. Aggressive. Tactful. Expressive. Independent.'

'A modern woman could ascertain her goals, achieve them, and maintain a strong household.'

A number of annotated conversations revealed that many of my friends wanted to find a partner and have a family. The views about family, if impressed, were more often than not core views. Liberation, independence and vocation, whilst in majority of responses, seemed equal to the ideas of marriage, childbearing and homemaking.

There were also a few people that entertained the ideas of physical description as opposed to societal status, goals and characteristics. Being beautiful in a physical capacity seemed to be a necessity in these opinions.

Certain friends had surprising rhetoric. I expected them to exclaim various progressive ideas made possible by the giant leaps of feminism in the 19th and 20th century. A new found independence in a modern area. A sexual revolution. Career dominated intent. A far cry from the 1950's typical American/Western nuclear family. What I received/heard was somewhat surprising. Although independence was often the initial statement or similar, the end of the conversation always drifted towards marriage, family life, and children.

I was a little surprised by the lack of cohesion when collating all of the responses received. The notions of independence or liberation were nearly always present but so was the complexity in which women view their lives. It seems that whilst trying to break free of historical influence women are having trouble finding an acceptable place in their modernity, both in personal perspective and also in societal reality. I do not mean reality in a negative or condescending manner but what is plausible in modern society.

The understanding of the term 'modern woman' does not seem to be universal. It seems that the phrase is somewhat enigmatic and indeterminable. In it's simplest understanding it is a woman existing in a modern era, in it's most complex, it has multifarious aspects ascertaining to gender, class, race, politics, biology, etc. Whilst females and feminism alike endeavour to find a place in contemporary time, so do males. Men, whilst feeling the privilege of masculinity, are under intense pressure to find a new role within gender relations due to the last hundred year of feminism. And so, whilst women battle (battle, I believe is the correct word) for equality, men are equally fighting to redefine their societal status to accord with this gender transition. It seems apparent that in today's societal upheaval and constant redefinition that both sexes are struggling to find a balance in the continual gender war.

When reflecting on all the opinions received a lack of clarity in the meaning of the popular phrase 'modern woman' seems to be apparent. I wonder if I were to reverse the question and ask males their opinion on the term 'modern man' would this be as equivocal?

Notes

I have deliberately stayed clear of racial connotations within this text. I am well aware that historical/current thought on skin pigmentation has an almost limitless resonance within the role of feminism and society as a whole. Unfortunately I do not have the resources or the knowledge to make reasonable comment.

I have chosen to discuss simply male and female opposition gender and know full well that this is not as definitive as I have insinuated.

The vocation of women asked was wide ranging from teachers to lawyers, shop assistants to housewives. Age was also wide ranging. All of the women asked were above the age of twenty.

One interesting point to make is that all opinions gathered are female opinions other than my own. Maybe, if a more comprehensive piece was written a wider net could be cast, so to speak.

Through Coffin Wood to Earth

In the movie "Kill Bill", the female protagonist Beatrix Kiddo was placed in a casket and buried alive by a male antagonist. After panicking, Beatrix gathered herself and began punching the box's lid. She had inches of wood and feet of earth preventing her from freedom, but she punched anyway, even though it seemed to viewers like she was wasting her sweat.

Twentieth century women did the same, punching the box male society buried them in for centuries, as people watched saying they were wasting their time. They grew up unable to vote, attend college, or work as professionals. A century later, millions are educated, working, and contributing to political life en masse for the first time in recorded history.

Given what early twentieth century girls were able to imagine and accomplish without examples, it is not idealistic, but practical to say this century's girls with role models will surpass their foremothers. The next step is not female domination, but working equally with men to solve modern life's myriad problems, including raising the kids.

Same as last century the power to break the box will come from college educations. A bachelors degree is essential for individual intellectual liberation and for competitive twenty-first century workers. Last century women matriculated, now their graduation rate shall exponentially grow.

Graduates will enter a workforce unable to ignore them. As the global competition flattens, it is necessary for businesses and nations to employ their females. The Old Boys Club will fade, as those that try to keep the status quo will fall dangerously far behind those, which chose not to ignore half their population.

As new professionals smash through the wood and earn management positions, they need to remember this is not a winner take all game. Powerful ladies must give the same respect to the opposite gender that their male superiors who promoted them showed. When considering who shall lead a company project they need to choose the most qualified individual - not a less talented woman ahead of a man, just because she's a gal.

Indeed it seems the biggest danger facing females in this century is not the male oppression but how they will use the power they inevitably shall receive. The noble use is not burying men to pay them back for women's historical treatment, but to collaborate effectively, remembering the past, but not letting it be a block of future progress.

What is progress?

Working side by side with men to raise the quality and nobleness of modern professional life, by only working for money until one's family's safety, leisure, and children's education are financially secure. Then professionals should devote their lives to the world, sharing their knowledge for free and striving to eliminate our race's most shameful choice - fighting to settle a dispute.

Additionally, women cannot forget what was left behind. As women rushed into the world of men, their old world of the home lost respect. For many it was not a badge of honor for a woman to be a Stay at Home Mom, but a sign of weakness, accepting their male given role. A woman at home was not brave enough to go out there and punch for equal rights. Is a woman who chooses to maintain the house and raise her children somehow a tragedy?

No, she is a saint.

This is not disrespect to those mothers who balanced work and home, or failing to acknowledge those godly figures that did both alone because there was no man around. Women choosing to work in the past century was necessary for societal evolution, they did not knowingly sacrifice time with their children for nothing.

This is merely to say that having one parent around at home for the kids is fucking important.

Perhaps in the twenty-first century, the home's sanctity shall be restored. Whichever half of the parents is able to stay there will not be regarded with contempt, but with equal honor to the one who leaves for work.

To conclude, women cannot and will not be kept down any longer. As the world moves away from physically dominated control to an intellectual place where those with the best ideas instead of the most guns prosper, women will not only refuse to sit on the sidelines, men will be on their knees begging for them to help.

Ms. Kiddo left the coffin. As twenty first century girls leave as well, they must remember life at home and to punish men for the sins of the past by moving forward together.

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Time spent as a human on earth where observation, interaction and study of women is unavoidable.

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<http://danoff.org>

Girls are like grapefruit
You can coddle them for hours
They still end up sour