



**WRITTEN & ASSEMBLED BY:**

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"Punk Rock Feminism rules okay" by Jenny Woolworth (My Riot Grrl Notebook, 1996)

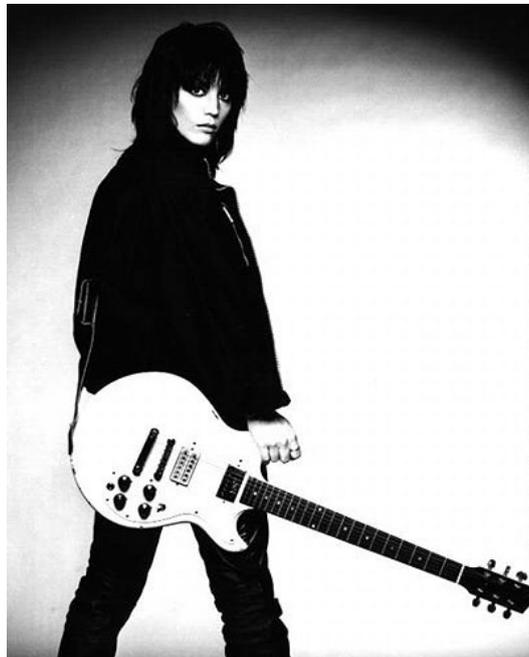
There aren't enough women in rock music.

The situation has got worse in recent years. It's a pretty poor state of affairs when the most high-profile contemporary female rock icon is probably Hayley Williams.

Of course, women in rock have always been few and far between. And their music is usually under-appreciated and quickly forgotten.... We remember Iron Maiden, but forget Girlschool. We remember Blur, but forget Elastica. We remember Nirvana, but forget Hole. We remember The Offspring, but forget The Distillers.

As a rock DJ, it's become painfully obvious to me how quickly female-fronted acts disappear from the cultural radar. Some misogynist hacks claim that all-male bands are more likely to be remembered because they're more "important", but try telling that to Patti Smith, Debbie Harry and PJ Harvey.

To some extent it's a self-perpetuating problem. There aren't enough female rock icons, so less girls than boys want to join bands, so there aren't enough female rock icons.



But the problem runs deeper than that. Little boys are expected to be practical, messy, perhaps experimental. Little girls are expected to be pretty and well-behaved. Boys are more likely to be encouraged to do things, but girls are expected to be ornamental. You just need to look at how we dress small children: let's face it, it's easier to climb a tree in trousers than in a skirt.

No wonder there are so few women in rock music. And no wonder there are so few women in rock playing instruments rather than being the pretty one at the front.

My name's Ruth, and I'm a trans woman. In my case, "trans" means that I was assigned a male gender at birth, but I identify as female and move through the world as a woman.

"Trans" can be wider than this though, incorporating all forms of gender-variant identity, experience and/or behaviour.

***"A trans identity is now accessible almost anywhere, to anyone who does not feel comfortable in the gender role they were attributed with at birth, or who has a gender identity at odds with the labels "man" or "woman" credited to them by formal authorities"***

- Stephen Whittle

Does this statement sound vague to you? It certainly sounds vague to me...but I feel that's a great strength. Trans liberation isn't just about transsexed people, or cross-dressers, or drag artists. It's about gender freedom for absolutely everyone.

***"The sight of pink-blue gender-coded infant outfits may grate on your nerves. Or you may be a woman or a man who feels at home in these categories. Trans liberation defends you both."***

***Each person should have the right to choose between pink or blue tinted gender categories, as well as the other hues of the palette. At this moment in time, that right is denied to us. But together, we could make it a reality."***

- Leslie Feinberg



# SO YOU THINK WE'RE EQUAL....?

**Women in the UK get paid on average 15.5% LESS than men.** (SOURCE: The Fawcett Society)

*(This is worse for black women and women in part-time jobs)*

Of the **£8.1 billion** savings being made through personal tax increases and cuts...

- **72%** (that's **£5.8 billion**) are being paid for by women
- **28%** (that's **£2.2 billion**) are being paid for by men

*(it's worth noting that even a 50/50 split would be unfair as men own the majority of the country's wealth)*

SOURCE: House of Commons Library

Lone parents, single female pensioners and single working women are some of the **hardest hit by cuts.**

It's worth bearing in mind that:

- **65% of public sector workers are women**
- **Women are more likely to use public services**
  - (because of economic inequalities)
  - (because of pregnancy)
  - (because of gendered violence, e.g. rape)

**Women are being forced out of their jobs, forced out of their homes, and forced to rely upon male relatives.**

...and if you think this is bad...

**88% of benefit cuts are not yet in force.**

**94% of departmental spending cuts are not yet in force.**

[READ MORE: www.wbg.org.uk](http://www.wbg.org.uk)

# UNTOLD AND UNHEARD STORIES: MALE RAPE

***"Everybody has heard the women's stories. But nobody has heard the men's."***

Will Storr, "The rape of men", The Guardian, 17 July 2011.

No one talks of male rape, yet it happens, both as an instrument of war and in peaceful times and places. The silence does nothing to resolve the problem, only to perpetrate the social stigma and the physical and mental pain for the victims.

Especially in the patriarchal societies found in many developing countries, gender roles are so strictly defined that:

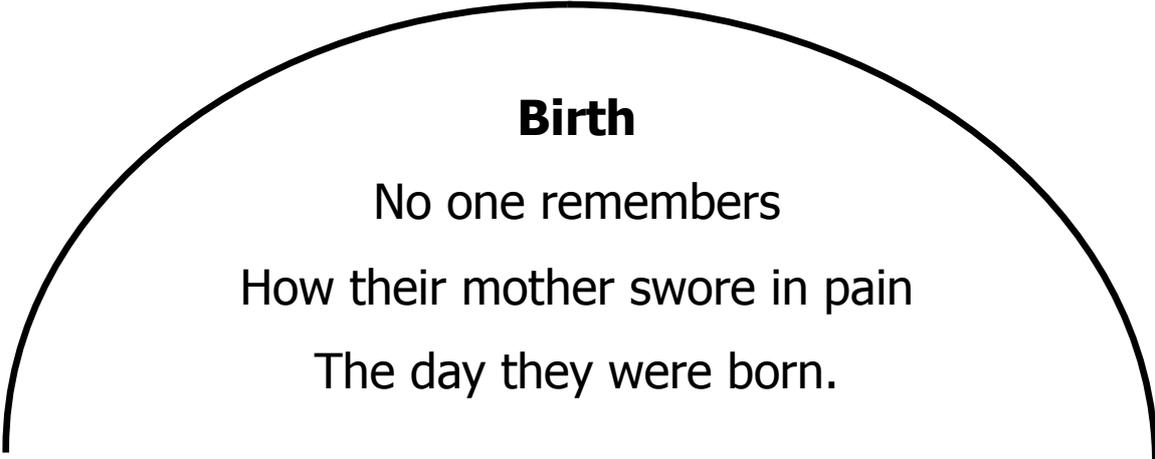
*"...both perpetrator and victim enter a conspiracy of silence and why male survivors often find, once their story is discovered, that they lose the support and comfort of those around them." (ibid.)*

What is terrible is that research on male rape is so rare that it is impossible to say even how common it is. No research has been done on the psychological and social consequences for the victims, or of the perpetrators' motives. One survey published in the Journal of the American Medical Association in 2010 found that "22% of men and 30% of women in Eastern Congo reported conflict-related sexual violence".

One of the very few researchers dealing with the problem, Lara Stemple of the University of California's Health and Human Rights Law Project, has found that, for example, 21% of Sri Lankan males who were seen at a London torture treatment centre reported sexual abuse while in detention; in El Salvador, 76% of male political prisoners surveyed in the 1980s described at least one incidence of sexual torture; and in a study of 6,000 concentration-camp inmates in Sarajevo, 80% of men reported having been raped. A documentary entitled Gender Against Men was produced in 2010 by Makerere University's Refugee Law Project (RLP) in Uganda; when it was screened, attempts were made to stop it by ... international aid agencies.

As one commentator under the article said, "I don't know what's more shocking – the prevalence of rape and sexual violence, or the fact that so many male victims are ostracised by their own families and communities."

To me, what is just as shocking, is the unbelievable "zero-sum game" mentality of those among the individuals working organisations that deal with sexual violence who restrict the definition of rape to female victims only. Rape in any situation is horrendous, but being silent about it really doesn't solve the problem!



## **Birth**

No one remembers

How their mother swore in pain

The day they were born.

# SPOT THE DIFFERENCE!

*The Telegraph, Sunday 12th February 2012:*

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## Sex change British man gives birth to son

A man who used to be a woman has become Britain's first "male mother" by giving birth to a son.



World's first male mum Thomas Beale

By Richard Alleyne  
3:35PM GMT 12 Feb 2012

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The man, who is believed to be in his 30s, was able to carry a child after taking female hormones to reverse the effects of his female-to-male sex change treatment.

The Daily Telegraph understands that the man, whose identity has not been disclosed, is now known as Thomas Beale.

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*The Telegraph, Monday 13th February 2012:*

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## Campaigners question ethics of Britain's first 'male mother'

Campaigners have criticised a British woman who underwent a sex change to become a man then given birth to a son.



World's first male mum Thomas Beale

By Richard Alleyne  
10:30AM GMT 13 Feb 2012

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The 'male mother', who is believed to be in his 30s, was able to carry a child after taking female hormones to reverse the effects of his female-to-male sex change treatment.

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## MY BODY (DESIRABILITY)

The poster I see is on the London Underground, although I later find out it's part of a wider campaign backed by the National Health Service. On it is a photograph of a person's face that, due to the limitations of our language, is all too easily described as "masculine". This individual is wearing somewhat exaggerated make-up: bright blue eye-shadow, bright red lipstick, and a heavy layer of foundation that's clearly failing to cover up an extensive five o'clock shadow. Said make-up is quite heavily smeared.

*"If you drink like a man", the poster declares, "you might end up looking like one."*

Whilst the model used in the photograph may well be a man, this poster is hardly a reassuring one for women with a "masculine" appearance. "If you're a woman who looks like a man", it says, "you're a skanky whore who drinks too much". Needless to say, this is a pretty misogynistic message that relies upon narrow ideals of beauty and gendered norms of acceptable behaviour.

But there's a further, quite blatant subtext to this poster. "If you drink", it declares, "you'll end up looking like a dirty, ugly tranny\*, and *then* how are you gonna get laid, huh?"

And this is the crux of the issue. The posters are just one tiny, tiny part of a message that can be found on billboards, in magazines, in the cinema, on the television, in newspapers, in books, and in even in freakin' academic papers. It's a simple message, and it runs as follows: **Transsexed women are deeply unattractive and inherently undesirable.**

I understand where this idea is coming from. Trans women tend to have lived as men (or at least as boys) for some part of their life, and what's more undesirable than a man? Hell, she might still have a penis. That's disgusting. What kind of red-blooded male could possibly want to bed one of *them*? (Since we're talking larger societal trends here, it is of course *men* who are supposed to sleep with *women*...what are you, some kind of gay?)

It took me a long time to gain confidence in my own sexuality. Some of that was down to my own body image, but the media bombardment ("you're ugly! No one will ever love you!") hardly helped, and neither did the attitudes of people around me. If a girl's a bit ugly or has a radical dress sense, she might "look like a tranny".

Regressive stereotypes obviously play their part in this. After all, in this very image-obsessed culture with its very limited repertoire of available attractive body types, why would any self-respecting straight man or gay woman accept their attraction to a woman who looks like a man?

It's an attitude that goes beyond image though: if you were to present our disappointingly average straight man (and our token gay woman) with a trans woman whose body conformed to society's attractive femininity, they're still likely to be wary. Once a woman is known to be transsexed, her appearance often becomes irrelevant as gender essentialism and/or misguided homophobia comes into play: she's innately unattractive.

In an impressive twist, this can even happen retrospectively, with a trans woman becoming hideously ugly *after* someone has had sex with her if they found out she's transsexed (or: if the person she slept with already knew and was trying to keep it quiet, but then someone else finds out that a bit of rumpy-pumpy occurred between the two). This kind of idiocy would be hilarious, if not for the treatment trans women get as a result of this. There's even an exciting legal manoeuvre in the US known as the "trans panic" defence, whereby the defendant attempts to excuse a transphobic assault or murder by claiming that after having sex with the victim, they "panicked" upon discovering that they'd done the dirty with a trans person. **But you know what? Fuck 'em.**

Trans people come in all kinds of shapes and sizes. I've been talking a lot about transsexed women, but there's also transvestites, genderqueer people (who might not necessarily consider themselves to be female *or* male), genderfluid individuals whose identities regularly shift, and a whole spectrum of gender diversity under the trans umbrella. We all tend to look quite different, act quite different, have different interests and ideas and aims and projects, but we're all bloody gorgeous.

That's not just my stubborn pride talking either. There are those trans people who do, in fact, conform to societal ideals of beauty. As for those who don't: in many queer circles, androgyny and gendered ambiguity are highly valued (and the actual gender identity of said androgynous individual is usually respected, regardless of whether that identity is female, male, or something entirely different).

In butch/femme lesbian communities, extremely "masculine" women are often considered to be incredibly hot. We're all attracted to different people in different ways. I'm pretty certain that there are straight men out there who fancy heavily built women, gay men who fancy men with vaginas, straight women who can handle androgyny. There's also a good reason why trans men are sometimes fetishised by lesbians and shemale porn is consumed by many, although I'd prefer for that attraction to be there without us being reduced to mere sex objects.

Still, for all our supposed undesirability, I find it pretty telling that most trans people I know are in a happy relationship with someone who's also pretty damn attractive. Actually, a lot of the trans people I know have *several* partners; I figure once you've dealt with society's disapproval of your gender identity, you don't tend to give a crap what others think about ethical, negotiated polyamory. By contrast, I personally happen to be a serial monogamist, but to each their own, y'know?

People who have serious body image issues can find someone who has the hots for them. These individuals aren't deluding themselves in the slightest. The real lie is in societal norms of acceptable attractiveness, but sexual attraction can't always be restrained by those norms. And we have a lot of fun sex too. Vanilla sex, kinky sex, gay sex, straight sex; I'm talking everything from straightforward sex to really weird sex.

We've all got our own ways of negotiating desire, identity and our own bodies. Some trans people just don't care and will go at it any old how. Others will throw essentialism out the window and redefine their own bodies. I know pre-operative trans women who describe their genitals as a large clitoris; I know non-operative trans women who describe their penis as a penis. It's just, y'know, a girl penis. It's on a girl's body after all, so what else could it be?

Meanwhile some trans people are asexual, but that doesn't necessarily mean they won't enjoy happy love hugs.

Quite frankly, a bet a whole load of women would love to be as confident and good looking as I am. I'm in a long-term relationship with a sensitive, caring, *bloody handsome* man, and we have awesome funtimes.

**Do you look like a transsexual this morning? No? Well, unlucky. You're missing out.**

**WHAT IS** *Yamamay* **a woman....?**



### **Conspicuous vacuity**

BBC TV presenter Robert Robinson said famously many years ago that the national dish of America was the menu. But the over-emphasising of description over content is in no way unique to the USA. We all live in a culture that emphasises appearance at the expense of content, and there is something fishy about that. But what is actually wrong with the fact that visual representation invades and replaces content?

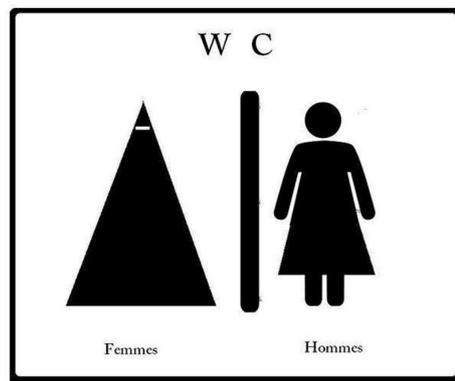
Think of the proliferation of visual culture, screens, mirrors in which we want to see our empty souls which we otherwise do not believe to exist. TV and magazines are at their best when they project images. Thus it is not surprising that they foster a culture which is obsessed with body shape (nothing wrong with body shape, but how about other possibilities - say, body composition, density, ability, skill, functionality, pleasantness, emotion, sensuality, ...?).

Think of the photos we take on nights out: necessarily featuring a person or a group at some unimportant backdrop, looking like they're having fun. Having done this myself, I can assure you that even if you happen to be having fun in that company and at that moment, you are most definitely not having fun at the very moment when the picture is taken. That moment is reserved for a full-fledged effort to stage it to look like you are having fun.

Perhaps the early development of photography has something to do with this: the fact that the earliest means of instant recording and mirroring human activity was purely visual and two-dimensional. But it took off not because it is limited or because there were no other means (there were: music, dance, painting, story-telling, writing, pantomime and many other ways to express ourselves have existed since humans have). Rather, photography latched onto an already present trend in Western European society: the need to display ourselves and receive recognition.

Imagine what the Internet would be like in a world inhabited by moles. Hmm... I can't. I can't imagine anything that is not visual. My other senses are dumbed down.

So often we look, but we do not see.



Made by Houssen Chebbi



As *The Sun* whinges about its journalists being arrested...

Major crime investigations are on hold as 171 police are drafted in to run three separate operations.

In one raid, two officers revealed they had been pulled off an elite 11-man anti-terror squad trying to protect the Olympics from a mass suicide attack.

Instead of being called in for questioning, 30 journalists have been needlessly dragged from their beds in dawn raids, arrested and held in police cells while their homes are ransacked.

**Private**

Wives and children have been humiliated as up to 20 officers at a time rip up floorboards and sift through intimate possessions, love letters and entirely private documents.

It is important that we do not jump to conclusions.

*Nobody has been charged with any offence, still less tried or convicted.*

Yet all are now on open-ended police bail, their lives disrupted and their careers on hold and potentially ruined.

**Man becomes UK's first ever to give birth**  
DAD is only the 4th person in world officially classed as male to have had a baby



**Greeks feel the heat as cuts are backed**  
RIOTERS torch cafes and shops as MPs pass drastic austerity measures  
66 comments



**Queen set for huge Jubilee laser finale**  
HER Majesty is to fire a giant laser down the Mall at end of her Diamond Jubilee concert  
12 comments



**Liverpool Luis says he's ever so Suar-ry**  
RACE row soccer ace made



...an exciting manhunt begins!

The boy is believed to have been delivered in a Caesarean op — although medics said that a natural birth could still have been possible.

The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority yesterday refused to disclose if it knew about the birth.

**Eggs**

But a spokesman conceded it may have given advice on the procedure.

**DO you know the man?**  
Call The Sun newsdesk on 020 [redacted]

Email  
[redacted]@the-sun.co.uk

Remember kids:

**Privacy is for News International employees, not for freaks and proles!**

**Object:** Peppermint teabag  
**Title:** Dating website advert  
Lonely teabag seeks cup with large saucer. Ideally with own teaspoon. Pretty round shape, refreshing peppermint smell. Likes sugar, honey, lemon. No milk, please. Hot water available on request.  
**Contact:** 079810 234567



# RIOT GRRRL LIVES!

Bands such as **Bikini Kill**, **Huggy Bear**, **Sleater-Kinney**, **Bratmobile**, **Le Tigre**, **Jack Off Jill** and **L7** are still relevant, important, and influential.

But there's more to riot grrrl today: see [riotgrrrlberlin.tumblr.com](http://riotgrrrlberlin.tumblr.com) for over five hours of free music by new bands, and the **Riot Grrrl UK** group on Facebook.



# NOT right

## “PERSPECTIVES ON PUNK ROCK”

Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> February,  
Robbins' Well, Leamington Spa.

The Rolling Head Centre for the Promotion of Punk is pleased to announce a **special half-hour graduate symposium** on the subject of guitar-based political sloganeering. It will take place as part of a fundraiser for the GYGL (Godiva Young Gays and Lesbians) LGBTQ youth group in Leamington Spa this Saturday, from 7pm.

### Keynote performers:

**Kirsty Lohman** (Sociology, University of Warwick)

**Ruth Pearce** (Sociology, University of Warwick)

**Richard Snowden** (MOAC, University of Warwick)

### *Theoretical loci and themes for debate include:*

- feminist praxis
- intersectionality
- punk community research methodologies
- transgender studies
- the ideology of austerity
- student protest
- riot grrrl

**ALL WELCOME!**

[www.facebook.com/notrightpunk](http://www.facebook.com/notrightpunk)