

56%



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When the magazine was founded, 56% of the students at Kenyon were women.

If you are interested in becoming involved with 56%, please contact Rachel at kauppilar@kenyon.edu, or email the crozier@kenyon.edu. We accept art and writing of any kind that would of interest to women.

The photo on the cover was taken by Kevin Guckes and was submitted for last year's Women of Kenyon Photo Exhibit and Competition.

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Love's Not Time's Fool

*In Honor of My Mother
Sorrento, Italy 2 a.m.*

by Claire Forte

My rich grandmother bends to wipe her spilled wine and crushed gold Venetian glass. As its edges cut her golden fingers, she sweeps away its remains, then collapses into bed.

My head feels heaviest at night. I try to dance, but my body craves connections deep in the ground.
Losing direction, I must search the lines of your bones burned into the earth. Your ashes leave, like stars, maps of light upon the body of the earth.

Silence Leads to Memory

Alone, I escape and release my body into the Mediterranean night, glide into a swim, curl into the sea, suspend in the hot green, cool mint water. Bending by the tides edge, I search for you, because this is where you love me now.

All We Can Do is Describe Their Appearance

My mother bent to sweep the stairs, her chemotherapy IV's twisting around the broomstick handle like her veins clung to her bones. Meanwhile, she fought the devil's bare hands as he beat on her back. He succeeds in bending her golden dancer body into itself until her naked skeleton feels only the air.

I search the light of the tide, and feel a push from below, a momentum connected within the earth and I swing back into my life. The hot green water leaves a film of salt securing my body, and suddenly I know:

I live this way because you left us.
I live this way because I knew you.
You are more real to me now, in your afterlife.
This is where we collide.



Maasai mama and child selling jewelry

Jenny Zangmeister

Finding Our Footing

Based on interviews with Anne Dealy, Jean Dunbar, Cathi Gilmore, and Lynda Bernays – members of the first co-educational class at Kenyon College

by Jessie Wohlgemuth

“I think it took the men some time to realize that we weren’t just fluff coming to Kenyon simply to find boyfriends. That we were actually academically oriented.” This is what Cathi Gilmore, a member of the first co-educational class at Kenyon, told me in an interview about her experience as one of 150 women in a school of about 1000 undergraduates. The women who came to campus in 1969 had heard of Kenyon’s reputation for years and were excited to get the chance to attend such a prestigious school. After visiting a friend at Kenyon before the school became co-ed, Jean Dunbar remembers, “I loved the feeling, I loved the cultural activities, and I loved the people. I remember going away thinking, ‘It’s too bad it’s all male.’” Women were coming to Kenyon for the same reasons that women come to Kenyon today: for the strong community feel and for the academic and cultural opportunities offered at Kenyon – not in order to place a ring on their fingers.

Women arrived on campus in 1969 slightly naïve about what to expect but, in general, confident about the choice they had made. As Anne Dealy recalls, “We were stepping foot into a ‘whole new world’ – but we were coming in on strong footing.” Kenyon, however,

was not yet prepared to be their solid ground. When they arrived their housing was not complete and for the first month they were placed in various buildings throughout campus. Cathi Gilmore says that she was housed with Dean Crozier who would lecture her and the four other girls she lived with, warning them about interacting with the male students. And, in fact, in the beginning the men were ambivalent about interacting with the women. The students in the sophomore, junior, and senior classes had made the choice to enroll in an all-male school without the thought of one day having to share their classrooms with women. Dealy remembers that when the women would go to the dining halls the fraternities would sit at the tables and call out numbers, rating them as they walked by. The women were not considered intellectuals yet and they would have to prove themselves before they would be seen as worthy of attending Kenyon. In fact, when they first arrived on campus they were not enrolled at Kenyon College but rather the “Women’s Coordinate College at Kenyon.” Fearful that their degrees would not be from Kenyon College the women protested, asserting their presence at the school, and in 1973 they earned their degrees from Kenyon College.

Though acceptance was slow the women began to feel better received as time went by. Dealy remembers feeling more integrated into the school especially after the oldest class of men had graduated. She also recalls that the fraternities became less prevalent with each passing year. These initial difficulties that the women were forced to overcome helped to solidify them as a group. As Gilmore points out, the women who arrived at Kenyon in 1969 were a part of something that only a small percentage of the country had experienced. By the end of their four years, Kenyon was fully co-ed but this core group of women shared a special bond and Jean Dunbar describes them as an unusually close

and caring class. This was a sentiment shared by each of the women interviewed – a sentiment to which Jean Dealy adds that, it was the academics that brought her to Kenyon, but it was the people who kept her there.

The women from the class of 1973 were a strong group of women, asserting their right to attend an all-male school. When they were met with resistance from the school and the other students they made a stand, earning their right to a degree from Kenyon College. Today, when they look back on their college days they look back not with regret or with a sense of having missed out on an important experience but with a fond recollection of their time at Kenyon.

Things hidden rap at doors. – Ukranian proverb

by Claire Fort

One night I was dancing alone in my room – dancing on the top of corn tassels – dancing a ring around the room and invented a brand new boogie – I'm inviting you to experience this barebacked dance – do you feel it rolling down your spine?

Things hidden – the icons I lost – hear me whirling in a purple skirt, rolling on the floors – now you rap at doors – St. Guadalupe, slum warrior, blunts and 40's, Kahlo and Graham. *Do not* – let things get out of hand – imagine the sky when he's gone – dance alone – wait until all you can do is literally inscribe a letter to you.

Look to the world – for me in the corner of that smoky blue jazz bar body rocking with the boy whose lips part for me – inside two parts of a new lime.

Open the page of this life – Be the walking ashes – the urban garden of lemon trees – who do you dream you are inside this plot of Elysian Fields? You do not have rhythm technique or poise – but you will make it through the winter.



**Sweet little girl
with Jewelry**
Jenny Zangmeister

Why It Is Worth Considering Your Menstrual Options

by Maureen Rees



What is the Divacup/Keeper?

The Diva Cup is a small, medical-grade silicone (the Keeper is the same thing but natural gum rubber, great if you have allergies) container that is placed in the vagina to catch the menstrual flow. They just remove the cup, dump the fluids in the toilet or sink, rinse the cup off, and then re-insert. At the end of the cycle they should wash it with soap, and then they can let it sit until they need it again. When it is inserted in the vagina most women don't feel it, even during exercise; it feels much like having a tampon in. It can be worn up to 12 hours at a time, and it is fine to use overnight.

The Keeper has been around since 1989 and the DivaCup followed in 2004.

Economic

- One reusable cup costs about the same as six-months' worth of tampons and sanitary napkins, but lasts for about 10 years, preventing the disposal of hundreds of conventional menstrual products.

Health

- Although most women think pads and tampons have been sterilized, they have not. In fact, **no feminine hygiene product has been sterilized.**
- FDA does not require that the ingredients in tampons and pads be listed anywhere in or on the package.
- Menstrual cups do not dry or scratch the vaginal walls or leave fibers behind (as tampons may).
- Menstrual cups do not interfere with the vagina's self-cleaning ability (as tampons do).
- Menstrual cups have never been linked to [toxic shock syndrome](#)
- As long as the area and hands are kept clean, menstrual cups do not cause cystitis by transferring [E. coli](#) from the anus to the urethra or vagina (as sanitary napkins may).
- Menstrual cups will not cause the warm, damp conditions around the vulva in which [candidiasis](#) or other bacterial growth can flourish (as sanitary napkins do).
- **Menstrual cups have never contained harmful substances such as dioxin, bleach or other chemicals used in the manufacture of commercial tampons.**

Environmental

- **Over 12 BILLION pads and tampons are USED ONCE** and disposed of annually, adding to environmental pollution.

- In a woman's lifetime, she is likely to use **15,000** sanitary pads or tampons.
- Plastic tampon applicators may not biodegrade for several hundred years.
- **An average woman throws away 250 to 300 pounds of tampons, pads and applicators in her lifetime.** The great majority of these end up in landfills, or as something the sewage treatment plants must deal with.
- Plastic tampon applicators from sewage outfalls are one of the most common forms of trash on beaches.

Freedom

- Menstrual cups can be worn for as **long as twelve hours at a time** before emptying (the maximum time manufacturers usually recommend tampons and sanitary napkins be worn is eight hours).
- Unlike tampons, menstrual cups can be inserted at any time of the month (useful for practicing) and can be inserted when a woman is expecting her period rather than having to wait for it to begin.
- They require little room in luggage even when packing for a trip lasting many months.
- As there is no waste to dispose of other than the menstrual blood itself, they are ideal for using in situations (eg. hiking or camping) when a woman would otherwise have to bury her used menstrual products, or carry them with her for the duration of her journey.

Are They Sanitary?

- Yes. The Divacup can be boiled and the Keeper can be rinsed with vinegar which disinfects and helps to regulate pH.

Sources/More Info

Email crozier@kenyon.edu

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The Voice Behind the Veil

The Necessity and the Hazard of the Intertwining of Nationalist and Feminist Movements in the Global South

By Risa Griffin

For the West, one of the most recognized, and perhaps least understood, symbols of apparent female oppression is the use of the Muslim Veil. Americans often lament the suffering of oppressed Middle Eastern women who are apparently denied both freedom and basic rights by the donning of this symbolic cloth, and who are in need of a champion, often in the form of Western Imperialism. It was common practice in the late 19th and early 20th centuries for Western nations to forbid the wearing of the veil by the Muslim peoples they were colonizing. However, the question arises, Is the rejection of the veil interchangeable with the embrace of women's rights and feminism in the Muslim world? And, if so, is it the place of the Western world to both make this decision, and to attempt to eliminate the ostensibly oppressive practice?

When examining issues such as the use of veiling by Muslims, and even 3rd world feminism as a whole, it is all too easy to make judgments and generalizations that seem too clear and too easily rectified to be true. And, generally they are. Certainly the veil has been used to limit the rights and equality of women in Muslim societies; however, it has also been utilized as

a symbol of national unity and cultural support by the women themselves. This issue epitomizes the often combative, and occasionally codependent, relationship between feminism and nationalism in the global south, and raises a plethora of questions regarding their often exploitative, but seemingly necessary association.

Women in the "developing" world must attempt to deal with a very different set of issues than people of the same gender in the West. In fact, it is far too simple to create this idea of "Third-World Women" and leave it at that. Every woman must consider not only the issue of gender, but also that of a unique history, culture, nationality, socio-economic status, ethnicity, and a superfluity of other distinctive factors. This is the basis of Chandra Mohanty's claim that it is both impossible, and in fact detrimental to the women themselves, to attempt to create the concept of an "average third-world woman." (Mohanty, 199) By endeavoring to accomplish this impossible task, Western feminists often alienate and misunderstand both the motives of and the forces behind women's movements in non-western countries. Because women in the global south are forced to deal with

the often overbearing assistance of Western feminists, they must constantly struggle, both for the rights of their gender, and for those of their nation.

In *"A Great Way to Fly": Nationalism, the State, and the Varieties of Third-World Feminism* Geraldine Heng explains the phenomena of Third World feminism, almost without exception, rising in concurrence with nationalism. The nature of the relationship between these two movements varies, both by situation and over time, however, it appears to be an inevitable, though often exploitive, partnership. Women in de-colonizing nations must, like their male counterparts, cope with issues of imperialism and cultural and ethnic oppression, as well as the struggle to create, both actually and figuratively, a national identity. Nationalist movements often embrace feminists, especially in their beginning stages, seeing them as a source of power and support. However, they also create competing interests for these

nationalist forces. Decolonizing nations often benefit economically from the exploitation of the women of their own culture, and therefore, often have a difficult time improving the situation for women in their nation at the expense, perhaps, of the nation's movement for ideological, economic, and physical independence. Geraldine Heng references the manipulation of the image of the "Singapore Girl," an exploitive and demeaning imaging of Singaporean women. (Heng, 32) Examples of countries benefiting economically at the expense of many of their female citizens are endless, and create a huge rift between feminist and nationalist movements. It is all too common for nationalist movements to claim to support, and sometimes even take steps to work with, feminist forces, only to abandon the cause once they have gained power, or they see these ideas as threatening to their overall goal, that of nationalism.

Demeter's Pursuit

by Shaina Cantino

I am a warm feathered mother.

I am a hardwood mother.

I am a drowning mother.

I am a drenched mother.

I am a nest-egg mother.

I am a cold fears mother.

I am a flesh mother.

I am a rooted mother.

I am a knotted mother.

I am a stitch-and-pull mother.

I am a cling-rock mother.

I am a blood mother.

I am a shaman mother.

I am a beacon mother.

I am a bruised mother.

I am an abandoned mother.

I am a bind-and-hold mother



Kenyan Bride

Jenny Zangmeister

State-Mandated Equality

A Brief Overview of Women's Rights in Sweden

by Maureen Rees

As a disclaimer, I am not an expert on Swedish legislation or on the women's movement there, but I hope to provide a summary of what I learned and experienced as a woman in Sweden for nine months during my junior year abroad.

I originally wrote this article about a year ago and I remember that I had not realized just how much I would have to say about the subject. Before arriving in Sweden, I had some vague background from women's studies courses at Kenyon and from cultural guides to Sweden, but I really did not know what to expect. Would it be evident in the street? Would it affect me in any way as a foreigner? Is state-mandated gender equality even possible?

State-sanctioned gender equity has its roots in the social engineering of the 1920's and 1930's. In Sweden during this period, industrialization and urbanization were occurring. The combination of WWI deaths, a greater emphasis on labor, and the rising number of women entering the workplace resulted in the decline of the population. The social engineers feared that the Swedish population would suffer from a drastic decrease. Today, there are only 9 million people, but at that time the number was even smaller. Thus, the state made plans to provide universal child-care, quality public schools, and a 6-hour workday for parents, as well as generous maternity leave with job security.

Paternity leave is also now encouraged, although it is still underutilized, an issue which I will discuss shortly. As a result of these measures, the majority of women in Sweden work outside the home.

After spending nine months there on a student's budget, I can see that it is necessary for a family to have two incomes. All of these services are paid for through hefty sales taxes as well as an income tax of approximately fifty-percent. I personally found Stockholm to be the most family-friendly place I had ever seen. There are ramps on all public stairs for baby carriages, and mothers and fathers proudly carry their children with them everywhere. The high frequency of fathers with children is also notable. From the outset of my program, the students noticed that babies and pregnant women were everywhere. One explanation for this phenomenon is that Swedish culture has decreased the social stigmas associated with abortions and early discussion of sex and birth control, resulting in a higher number of planned and wanted pregnancies. In addition, there is virtually no shame associated with unplanned pregnancy or children born into live-in relationships, called "sambas."

Despite the fact that great measures have been taken to foster gender equality, there are still some obstacles. First of all, many women

favor part-time work when they have young children, which leads to the same types of wage disparities that occur in the United States. Though measures have been taken to alleviate this discrepancy, including a mandate that calls for efforts to be made to hire the underrepresented sex, the differences still exist. Female workers are still generally performing service-sector jobs and men performing higher-level work, making it more difficult for men to take advantage of the available paternity-leave. In addition, single mothers receive a stipend from the government as well as the same childcare opportunities available to children in two-parent homes, which allows single mothers to work with a decreased susceptibility to poverty.

Because the issues of gender equality have been managed almost entirely by the government, there are very few independent women's movements. As a result, services such as rape hotlines and domestic abuse shelters have been slow to emerge. There is also a profound sense that rape and domestic abuse do not occur here, which impairs the movement and prevents women from seeking the necessary assistance.

There is some suggestion that the equality issue has been taken too far. For example, there has been a recent push for male and female haircuts to cost the same despite the

fact that women's hairstyles are often more complicated. Public toilets cost 5 kronor (about 75 cents) and urinals are free. Honestly, given what I know about Sweden, I am surprised that this is the case.

This issue is quite extensive, covering a wide range of topics, including prostitution (buyers rather than sellers are criminalized), the rise of the Feminist Party, and sex education (it is begun at around the age of six), but many books have been written on all of these issues. I hope that these ideas about the Swedish system can provide some background and inspiration for Americans interested in women's issues. Sweden is a small country and its citizens agree to give up a lot in the form of taxes in order to receive certain benefits from their government. It is highly doubtful that reforms to this extent will occur in the United States, but the values behind them can be taken and translated on a small scale. For me at least, it was inspiring to have the opportunity to study in a place where I could walk down the street and not receive any catcalls; this is something that I was acutely aware of when traveling elsewhere in Europe. Experiencing Sweden gave me the valuable knowledge that such a system and a culture exists and is largely successful, though it is certainly not perfect.

What a Ravenous Girl You Are

for my sister Shelley

by Claire Fort

Do you ever laugh aloud at your mistakes?

I'm navigating the world you love, studying its maps.

In your house, even the dawn is anxious and waiting for her sister's morning laughter, her expectant footsteps on the stairs, as the dog growls in its bed, the grey clouds are stirring awake the sky, and jade leaves are jostling for sunlight.

At breakfast, I ask, "Do you remember out last summer with mom? We made vanilla ice cream." You repeat the recipe by heart: "4 egg yolks, milk, heavy cream, salt, sugar, and ice. The stirring took forever and my hands got tired. Mom added fresh raspberries and maple syrup. We ate from blue bowls, using grandma's spoons." All whispers of ritual.

My lips unravel a thousand tongues and begin by saying thank you, but never again in mourning song: thank you to my mother, whose memory I cling to so absentmindedly, and to my sister, for taking my hands when we scatter her ashes into the sea.