

TEENSCOPE

60
Solihull
Sixth Form
College
www.solihullsfcc.co.uk

written by students for students

autumn 2022

GENDER & GEN Z

NEW FICTION

FILM REVIEW

WOMEN IN SOCIETY

Also in this edition: Unlocking Your Future

SPEECHLESS

By Leah Berry

“My fists bunched up.
I kicked the ground and
it spewed fragments of
the earth. At least the
ground couldn't argue”

I kicked the ground and it
spewed fragments of the earth.
At least the ground couldn't
argue.

Surrounding me were the tweets of magpies, pigeons, and finches. Filling the forest floor were auburn, sunshine or sunset leaves that squelched dribbles of rainwater when I ever so gently pressed down on them. Alternatively, there were ones that shouted a captivating crunch. Every step I took, the sounds circled me, like teasing. Because I couldn't do the things they could, didn't mean they were better than me... right? Just because birds can tweet, leaves can crunch, and winds can howl does not put them on a pedestal! My fists bunched up, I kicked the ground and it spewed fragments of the earth. At least the ground couldn't argue.

Night in the forest trumps the day: no birds tweet, no leaves crunch, and the wind does not howl. Tranquil, soothing, calming, I can lie on the floor or hang in a tree without being bombarded with what I cannot replicate. It was one of those times where I belonged – in the isolated woods at onyx night. Burning millions of miles away, the flickering stars were my only source of light. Orion, Hercules, Draco, my best of friends. Only they understood what it was like to be me. To be cast aside for something better, something useful.

When I mention the night, most people imagine the moon. It could be as black as jet, as dim as a coal mine with no torches, yet the moon will be present. Where man conquered, stuck its flag in the moon's surface and spoke 'One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind.'

I wouldn't have said anything if I floated on the moon because I can't.

Running of crystal-clear water snapped me from the place I would rather be. So quickly it appeared the speed of a snail, liquid perfection spewed from the waterfall to crash in the plunge pool. Looking down into transparent water, pebbles the size of golf balls and pins littered the riverbed. The sounds of mother nature.

If I cover my ears, I can grasp at how this is meant to feel, what I am meant to think. If birds can tweet, leaves can crunch and winds can howl, why can I not talk? I kicked the ground and it spewed fragments of the earth. At least the ground couldn't argue.

Thank you to Leah Scarlett for the use of her photography both here and on the front page.
We look forward to sharing more of our photography students' work in the next issue

YOUR VIEW ON FEMINISM NEEDS TO CHANGE

By Lily Beddows

Gen Z has been declared as the most “woke” generation to date – as both a statement and an insult. However, despite our generation’s reputation, why is it that so many young men (and sometimes women) actively announce their hatred of feminism?

In this article, I will discuss how media platforms such as social media have villainized feminism and those that support it, creating a substantial portion of individuals that support simply untrue, prejudiced, and bigoted opinions about a cause that advocates for equality for all, and why this needs crucial and drastic reform.

Firstly, let’s debunk the myths that have been created about feminism. Feminism is a branch of egalitarianism (the belief that all people are equal) - the claim

that feminism only supports women’s rights and is fueled by misandry is a blatantly false accusation. Imagine this analogy: two people are watching a football game over a fence - one person is significantly shorter than the other, so the shorter individual needs to stand on a box so both people can see at the same level. Feminism does not take away anything from men, as so many insecure and paranoid anti-feminists claim; it simply fights for the necessary support women need to be on an equal footing with men.





The impact of social media, especially on TikTok, has caused the aims and reputation of feminism to become severely twisted; the fact that this villainized perception is frequently exposed to Gen Z, and shockingly even Gen Alpha, could lead to the continuation of a world corrupted by misogyny and patriarchal views. As a teenage girl, I spend a considerable amount of time mindlessly scrolling through TikTok. Worryingly often, I have been subjected to videos of clearly uneducated people spreading disinformation about feminism, such as 'feminism takes away men's rights!' or 'feminists want to kill all men!' Those with an anti-feminist attitude are more easily susceptible to this content and are more likely to spread it around online; this causes a chain reaction, a surge of borderline misogynistic propaganda expanding online, creating more and more anti-feminists. This surge of anti-feminism has caused not just feminism to become targeted – women in general are, too. Inconceivably, misogynistic opinions and views have become normalized, especially on the TikTok community. One reason for this is the popularity of the 'sigma male;' the actual definition of a 'sigma male' is a man who chooses to live his life outside of traditional societal structures, is self-reliant, and looks for internal strength without external validation from others. However, in TikTok terms, a 'sigma male' is a man who is blatantly misogynistic and hateful

towards women, and who receives praise from other men from doing so. Most of these 'sigma' TikToks typically contain clips of men either harming women physically and/or verbally, followed by some sort of appraisal from other men. Unsurprisingly, most of this content is being produced and liked by boys under the age of 14, and is most likely a response to the amount of misinformation about feminism present online – proof why reform about the understanding of feminism is urgently needed.

Feminism has achieved life-changing feats for women across the globe, such as the renowned suffragette movement, equal education opportunities, and protections against gender discrimination in the workplace. However, the sad truth is that in some respects, feminism has made the world even more misogynistic, due to patent lies a worrying amount of people have believed. A damaging backlash caused by the fight for equal civil rights: those against feminism need to be enlightened; we must we protect the values of what feminism truly represents, to ensure that the women and girls of the future are still protected by the system that combats the harmful prejudice against them. It is up to you to educate yourself on a certain topic before you spout your opinions everywhere; the consequences clearly are extremely dire.

WHAT IS WOKE? HERE'S EVERYTHING YOU SHOULD KNOW

Described by Merriam-Webster as "chiefly US slang", the dictionary defines the word as: "Aware of and actively attentive to important facts and issues (especially issues of racial and social justice).

"Stay woke became a watch word in parts of the Black community for those who were self-aware, questioning the dominant paradigm and striving for something better."

Woke was used in this politically aware sense as far back as 1962 in a New York Times Magazine article written by William Melvin Kelley, titled If You're Woke You Dig It.

Erykah Badu's 2008 song Master Teacher also featured the lyric "I stay woke" This helped to make the word popular across communities In 2012 the Russian feminist group Pussy Riot were imprisoned for a protest on the oppression of women, Badu Tweeted: "Truth requires no belief. Stay woke. Watch closely. #FreePussyRiot."

The use of the word reached the mainstream when the Black Lives Matter movement used the hashtag #stay-woke following the murder of Michael Brown.

Merriam-Webster explains: "The word woke became entwined with the Black Lives Matter movement; instead of just being a word that signalled awareness of injustice or racial tension, it became a word of action. Activists were woke and called on others to stay woke,"

The term "woke police" is used by critics of the movement as a way to create a negative image of those who fight for social justice issues. The claim is that woke people are policing other's actions and words but former barrister and Guardian columnist Afua Hirsch says: "The truth is, there are no woke police. In reality, the real groupthink is that of the anti-woke, the most weaponised identity of all."

Hirsch points out the irony of "the rightwing culture warriors [who] claim to support free speech" but "they seem to want minorities to shut up and stop complaining".



Unlocking Your Future

By Lily Beddows

Work Experience has become a vital utensil for securing a confident future. Whether you are unsure of what career path to take, have a slight idea, an interest, or have your heart tied to a specific work field – you can expand the opportunities available to you through experiencing the working world first hand. Having the experience of a specific occupation has many benefits: you can personally become involved, which will be an immense help in deciding what career is truly the right fit for you.

Countless opportunities are available. For those who are dead set on a specific career path, temporarily going to work for a company will be the most useful – work experience like this takes place over a few weeks (usually 2-6) and will require you to physically go to an office or other workplace. But what is the point? Whilst this can be time-consuming and tiring, future employers will be impressed by your experience – it shows dedication, passion, and a genuine interest in that specific work field. Most employers look for candidates with some sort of experience under their belt: not only does work experience help elevate you in terms of individuality, but it also prevents you from being overshadowed by your competitors.

If physically going to work for a company seems too daunting, or you are not prepared to travel, virtual work experience is also an option. I can personally recommend a website called Springpod – it is a careers platform which offers virtual work experience completely free of charge. A few months ago, I completed a course on Springpod that required me to complete various tasks, however I could do it in my own time over the course of three weeks; this was especially useful for me, as I received an introduction into what working in that career path would be like and had a taster of what types of tasks I would have to complete. I was able to incorporate this work into my day, so I had time for college, independent study, and relaxation. Virtual work experience is best for those who are still unsure about the future and want to explore different work fields.

Work experience is the solution to giving yourself a head start and gives you the knowledge you need to make yourself stand out from the competition. It is better to start too early, rather than too late.

Do all women experience oppression in the same way?

By Olivia Jennings

As a young white girl I always knew that sexism existed and that all women at some point in their lives would experience it. However, my perception of this expanded when a 15-year-old black girl from London was strip searched while on her period. It then came into question that there were three factors as to why this girl was abused by the police; the main one being that she was black, she was a girl, and she was also a child. The met police have a long-standing reputation of being discriminative towards ethnic minorities which was evident again through this case. The story of this young woman made me realise that not all women have the same amount of equality; women are divided by intersectionality.

I then had to ask myself as a white woman if I would have been treated this way if I was in this position. The fact that we must ask these questions at all conclude that we are living in a corrupt society where people are not judged for "the content of their character" as Martin Luther King said but rather "the colour of their skin", their gender, sexuality or even their social class. This puts our country in a continuous hierarchy. Women need to unite as one to bring these issues to the surface.

The Met police in London currently have a long-standing negative reputation of violence against women; there are currently 548 police officers who are under investigation. In addition to this some of these policemen have not been suspended from their position while under investigation. As a female citizen of the UK, I must now ask myself while going to London: do I trust the service of the police which is supposed to keep me safe. The simple answer to that question would be no. Moreover, being a part of the police gives one convicted policeman who has raped several women the entitlement to say "I've been a policeman for years" which he expects excuses his crimes.

Have you ever waited in line for the toilet? Have you ever been told your outfit is too distracting? Have you ever avoided making eye contact in case the car might stop? Have you ever heard that it's okay to do this to her because she's "just a girl". It's the golden excuse to excuse some privileged boys one more time before we trust them to take responsibility in our society.

In the 21st century, many people claim that our western society has reached a state of social justice. Women now have the rights to vote, have a working life and have access to a free education. However, while we witness forms of rapid pro-

gression and change, we must still question if we still live in a patriarchal society and will it inevitably always be this way. In the previous year of 2022, we witnessed the ban of abortion within seven states of America passed by the Supreme court.

During this ban many republicans spoke on behalf of being "pro-life". The laws that have now been passed to ban abortion take into no consideration the mental trauma of rape or incest within aborting the foetus. The only exception of an abortion taking place is when the woman's life is at a physical risk. Although these decisions effect the lives of women a male representative of the Republican party, Steve Schmidt, spoke on behalf of all women claiming that "rape is a difficult issue" "But there's an opportunity for that woman" and "that child can grow up and be something magnificent, a wonderful family person, cure cancer." Despite being a man and never experiencing the physical pain that results in childbirth in addition to never experiencing the trauma of rape, Schmidt takes no shame in playing the guessing game in these issues as confidently as possible.

In a Patriarchal society we know that through intersectionality that the white, middle class male falls within the higher power of our society. Due to this the voice of Schmidt is heard loud and clear by the Supreme court. But not the ones of the women in those seven states that now risk potential life-threatening illegal abortions.

Pro-life or Pro-power?

Republicans claim to be "pro-life" within their support of making abortions illegal as a potential child could be aborted that could "cure cancer". But if the Republicans are fully "pro-life" we must take into question their support of the death prenatally that to date has resulted in 136 known innocent deaths. However, despite previous murder the death penalty still exists and supported by the Republican party, so we must question if the party is pro-life or pro-power. Why has only some change come about for gender equality?

Through social media, we now as a society have the collective voice that can destroy influencers, Politian's, brands and we can direct society. This is only made possible through the interactivity of apps by allowing us all the comment, like, dislike and report through this we have become the producers of the world that we lead. But despite this thirst for social change as a collective society, propaganda and dictatorship prevent us from progression. This is evident through

the abortion laws as many objectifications of the laws don't stop it from taking place. A lot of the support for women's right has taken form through the hashtag "metoo" movement where much of the international gender injustice was exposed. Within the movement the first motivation to start sharing was through the anger over Sarah Evered who was murdered on 3rd March 2021 proving to society that gender inequality is far from over. In addition, the safety of women cannot be protected fully even against our own police force. As a result, we're left with 50% of the globe questioning who they can trust.

We then have to question is the metoo movement only there to convince us that we're in control rather than being the catalyst for systemic change. In response to media backlash Prime minister Johnson stated that he'll do "everything possible" to prevent crimes against women.

Despite this pledge from Johnson to protect women against dangerous crimes regarding their safety and the police we must question if his motivations are purely political propaganda. The Metropolitan police less than twelve months later were exposed on BBC news that in June 2020 two male officers had photographed two female corpses. In addition to sharing the images of their bodies with fellow co-workers on two private WhatsApp groups, one of which had 41 officers, they labelled the murder victims as "two dead birds". Had I included all examples of misogyny regarding the metropolitan police this article would've been considered a book.

This therefore being a further demonstration that bringing gender equality to our nation may be something that requires wholesale cultural change and something that can't be altered overnight. Evidence suggests that sexism is embedded into all levels of society both consciously and unconsciously. This will remain until the balance of power in society reaches some diversification other than the white, middle-class male.

The World Economic Forum states that the pay gap won't close for another 136 years. We're going backwards as previously in 2020 we were predicted one hundred years. Do you think you'll live to see this change in gender approach? If this is to be believed, I could now say with certainty as a woman living in the 21st century that I will never live in a world where I'm considered equal to a man. Surely, this can't be right? Surely, we can do something ground-breaking to change this narrative once and for all? It'll be up to every single one of us to be that change, every single day.



THE RETURN OF THE SCARY-DOLL MOVIE

“ We have already got our fair share of dolls in the grand tradition of the horror movie doll trope- so it was only typical to assume that M3GAN would be no different. ”

M3GAN is officially out in cinemas in the UK and has been since Friday the 13th of January this new year. That is a smart date to release a horror movie argues Shayma Ishaq

The movie is part of the horror genre with parts of comedy entailed. It follows the robotics engineer Gemma, who develops a 4-foot AI girl robot for her niece Cady whose parents had died in a car crash. M3GAN (Model 3 Generative ANdroid), pairs with Cady (her primary user) to read her emotions, connect to home internet, and even copy other people in mimicry. This fatal skill only led to a macabre series of murders.

M3GAN taps into Cady's emotions, corrects her mistakes and helps develop her education. She accompanies her to an outdoor school Gemma had suggested so Cady could socialise with other children. The trip turned out to be quite eventful. When a boy that got partnered up with Cady in outdoor school was shown to be a bully, M3GAN gave him an ear pull for being naughty and chastised him for his lack of manners.

This AI with a Napoleonic complex monopolises situations to how she sees fit. She was intent on Cady's safety, taking whatever measures she believed were necessary.

M3GAN immediately begins to rid of any threats to Cady like the dog belonging to Gemma's next-door neighbour. The dog had bitten Cady who, as a result, had to sport a lengthy bandage on her arm for a couple of days. Meanwhile, M3GAN decided to show the dog that her bark is much worse than her bite. She did the same to the owner as well, using the pressure washer to ensure the old woman would not come back. It is quite grim if you think about it, but many argue she is just conducting her objective.

Her objective almost strays when she stabs Gemma's boss and his assistant, framing it as a murder and suicide. Gemma soon realises that M3GAN is dangerous and takes the AI back to her workplace-wrapped rightly in cling film.

Gemma left M3GAN with her friends, who began analysing her. She escaped and left them to deal with a fire she caused, turning the fire alarm off when she left so no one would know to help them.

Like Chucky (Child's Play Franchise) she does what she can to go back to the child she first spoke to. M3GAN figured out where Cady is staying and went back her first home for some unfinished business...

Horror fanatics would love this movie-even though there is some dodgy dancing going on. Get this, M3GAN performed a whole choreography before murdering a couple of mortals. Despite being a killer robot, M3GAN's fan base

is expanding, and she has developed an online following. "Insane, right?" - M3GAN

We have already got our fair share of dolls in the grand tradition of the horror movie doll trope- so it was only typical to assume that M3GAN would be no different. What did she say after being caught out for murder? "Oh, big whoop."

The writers tread a fine line between the doll's witty modern dialect, and it comes off as "adults-trying-to-speak-teenager," giving the movie a youthfulness that does not usually occur in the horror genre.

This new horror doll sensation is exceptionally modernised and includes mentions of social media, specifically TikTok. It has amassed over 146 million dollars globally and the Rotten Tomatoes ratings are at 5/5. The movie continues to hit new milestones and reach to further audiences. It is the latest lucrative success in the horror genre so far, exceeding other recent horror hits that are in parallel with the movie such as Smile or The Black Phone.

If you would like to write a
story for **TEENSCOPE**  contact us
roy.preston@solihullsfc.ac.uk

