

## GENDER ISSUE



# TWO SIDES

## HOW CANNABIS AFFECTS MEN & WOMEN

Many studies have shown that even casual, recreational use of cannabis will change the size, shape and density of the brain. These risks are particularly high for youths, because their brains are not fully developed until the age of 25.

Due to biological differences, men and women also experience the effects of cannabis differently.

### HAIR LOSS

The study of regular cannabis smokers found that young men in particular were prone to hair loss, especially when coupled with the carcinogenic effects of smoking.

Source: The University of Amsterdam

### HIGH RISK OF PSYCHOSIS

Men are twice as likely to develop schizophrenia or psychosis as women; and 4 times as likely to be hospitalised for cannabis psychosis, especially in younger men.

Source: Cannabis Psychosis, Gender Matters, 2015

### MAN BOOBS

Men who regularly smoke marijuana can develop gynecomastia – aka man boobs – due to the hormonal imbalance it causes.

Source: Mayo Clinic and the National Institute of Health

### WEIGHT GAIN

Cannabis gives men serious munchies, which can lead to weight gain, and decreases the capacity for exercise.

Source: Yale University School of Medicine, 2015

### ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION AND INFERTILITY

Regular cannabis use may lead to erectile dysfunction and inhibited orgasm<sup>1</sup>. Studies have also found reduced sperm counts in men who smoked weed. A 2015 Danish study estimated that approximately 15% of the young men in their study might need fertility treatment in the future if they wanted to father a child<sup>2</sup>.

Source: 1. Richard Balon, Wayne State University, 2017 | 2. Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, 2015

### SIGNIFICANT DIZZINESS

Women who use marijuana report significantly more dizziness after smoking up and have greater changes in blood circulation.

Source: British Journal of Pharmacology, 2010

### BAD COMPLEXION

Puffing on a joint can lead to aging skin; conditions like rosacea, eczema, and psoriasis are also worsened. Cannabis use also is linked to acne and increased facial hair in women thanks to hormonal imbalance.

Source: Greenwich Village Dermatology

### DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY

Young women who smoked pot daily were five times as likely as non-pot smokers to develop depression and anxiety.

Source: Columbia University, 2013

### MEMORY IMPAIRMENT

In a study entitled “Sex, Drugs, and Cognition: Effects of Marijuana,” researchers found that cannabis affected visuospatial memory impairment in women more than men.

Source: Journal of Psychoactive Drugs, 2010

### DISRUPTED MENSTRUAL CYCLE

Studies show that even 1g of marijuana is enough to disrupt the menstrual cycle. This also impacts fertility as well as fetal development, as it messes with estrogen levels.

Source: Modern Fertility, 2018

## LARGE AND IN CHARGE

### Contributors

Chan Choy Yu  
Ci En  
Isabelle Chua  
Lindsay Wong  
Lydia Tan  
Nina Gan  
Yin Loon  
Vincent Tan  
Yuki Koh

### Editor-in-Chief

Aaron Stewart  
aaron@campus.com.sg

### Creative Director

Lynn Ooi

### Designer

Yun Ng

### Sales Enquiry:

ad\_query@campus.com.sg


### Lennox & Ooi Media Pte Ltd


11 Paya Lebar Road #02-12 S409050  
Tel (65) 6732 0325

Campus is a publication of Lennox & Ooi Media Pte Ltd (Singapore). All articles published are in good faith and based on bona fide information available to The Publisher at the time of press. The Publisher accepts no responsibility other than that stipulated by law. The Publisher also accepts no responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts, transparencies or other materials. All rights are reserved and no part of this publication may be reproduced in part or full without the previous written permission of The Publisher. Neither can any part be stored or recorded, by any means. The opinions expressed in The Publication are those of the contributors and not necessarily endorsed by The Publisher. This publication and the name are owned solely by Lennox & Ooi Media Pte Ltd, 11 Paya Lebar Road #02-12 Singapore 409050. Email: interns@campus.com.sg. Campus is published bimonthly and distributed throughout Singapore. Trademarks and copyrights for all other products, logos and depictions contained herein are the properties of their respective trademark and copyright owners. All colour separation and printing by Drummond Printing Pte Ltd.

## ISSUE 70 | MAR '21 CONTENTS

Check our website  
[www.campus.sg](http://www.campus.sg)

 campus.singapore

 campusSG

### 02 Under the Carpet

Singaporean transgender history

### 03 The Duality of our Being

Gender identity vs sexual orientation

### 04 Beyond Male/Female

Gender fluidity in Kpop

### 05 Different Type of Bias

Double standards in Kpop

### 06 Fear of Feminine

The Phenomenon of Femmephobia

### 09 Who Talks More?

Do women talk more at meetings?

### 10 Pinks, Blues & Gender Cues

Colour preference by gender

### 11 Housewives & Firemen

How our language is still sexist

### 13 Change in the Horizon

Asia's shifting gender roles



### REGULAR STUFF

08: Cheat Sheet:

Feminism & Men

12: Cheat Sheet:

Gay World Leaders

### 14 Men > Women

Why AI is still sexist

### 16 Manly Steaks & Feminine Salads

Gendering of food

### 17 Weird Nature

Unusual gender roles in the animal kingdom



## Student contributors always welcome!

Want to get into the crazy fast-paced world of publishing, or do you just have a thirst for writing? If you're passionate about the art of word and love your research, then we'd love to hear from you.

### Join us as an Intern!

Our doors are always open to those who want to learn the ropes about publishing from all aspects. If you love to write, you'll not only get your articles published both in print and online, you'll also get first dibs at any events (ie. concerts) we're invited to. We've also got space for designers and marketing peeps – you'll get to dabble in all our social media and handle our website.

### Be one of our Contributors!

Don't have time for a full-time gig at the office? Fret not. You can be one of Contributors – you'll get to write for both the website and the magazine, and still get to attend events we get invited to. You won't have to be in the office at all – join our network of Contributors who come from schools all across Singapore.

If you're interested in coming onboard, do drop us an email with your CV. We'd love to get to know you! Email us at [interns@campus.com.sg](mailto:interns@campus.com.sg)

# Under the Carpet

By Isabelle Chua

## The Phantom of Singaporean Transgender History and Identity

In 2018, Singaporean playwright Michael Chiang re-staged Private Parts, a play which had debuted in 1992 at the Singapore Festival of Arts – a bittersweet comedy revolving around 3 transgender characters. He decided to retain the 1990s Singapore setting, as in many respects the work was firmly situated in that time period. Not only are the caricatures of transgender women in Private Parts easily recognisable portrayals of Blanchard's dual typology which are widely discredited today, but the 1990s was also a sensitive time in Singapore's queer history: the dismantling of Bugis Street.

### What was Bugis Street?

Today, most of us know Bugis Street for its fast fashion and quaint pet cafes, among other things. Most of us are unaware of the fact that before the wave of urban redevelopment, Bugis was a hotspot for transgender/trans-adjacent individuals and the Caucasians who frequented our shores from the 1950s onwards.

Much of the leniency towards Bugis Street's activities and Singapore's now-unthinkable status as the Bangkok before Bangkok could broadly be chalked up to our colonial rule; it did not take long for an independent Singapore to begin cracking down on rowdy activities such as the Australian sailors' tradition, the Dance of the Flaming Arseholes.

Much like any other socially unacceptable behavior in Singapore, a great deal of the urban redevelopment can be attributed to a concerted effort to push the scene underground.



### Gender reassignment

Although the first gender confirmation surgery was performed in 1971 – with a relatively great deal of contemporary media coverage confined to small, out-of-sight columns in the Straits Times following that – in the 1980s the Ministry of Health requested hospitals that had offered the procedure to begin phasing it out. This concluded



with the eventual cessation of gender confirmation surgeries in 2001 by NUH's Gender Identity Clinic, ostensibly over HIV transmission concerns.

It was shut down, discreetly reopened in 2003 as a result of a petition, and permanently closed in 2008. At present, medical services for transgender Singaporeans are conducted behind closed doors, under a complete veil of secrecy.

This institutional invisibility is generally reflective of Singapore's public policy attitude not just towards the transgender community, but furthermore towards hot-button social issues writ large. This invisibility is encoded into law – or rather, the lack of it. Transgender issues are still a sensitive topic for governments around the world, and where possible most governments would greatly prefer not to see these issues, or to resolve them without resolving them.

### Transgenderism & the Law

Most legal cases in common law jurisdictions (US, UK, Australia, etc.) tend towards applying anti-discrimination laws based on sexuality in order to achieve the objective of protecting trans individuals, with the general view or evasion that one does not have to answer the question of what sex/gender is in order to enforce these protections.

Beyond all this, there is one extra layer of secrecy which shrouds Singapore's transgender community and its stories – the lack of encoding into law. The only reference you will find to trans individuals in Singapore is in section 12 of the Women's Charter – added in 1996 – which permits those who have transitioned fully in the eyes of the law to marry the appropriate sex.

Beyond that, the law is entirely silent on the status of transgender individuals. Unlike other countries which have statutory transition processes (Gender Recognition Act in the UK, Transsexuellengesetz in Germany), the process of transition in Singapore is entirely comprised of executive policy, and therefore entirely at the whim of the government. Should the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) decide tomorrow to drastically change their policy on IC changes, it can be effected without any official notice – an occurrence which has (to my knowledge) cropped up as recently as 2018.

### Where do we go from here?

It is an unfortunate fact that the lives of the trans community rest on a whim as a result of a broader unwillingness to even recognise its existence.

The philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, in his theory of recognition, suggests that the normative act of recognising another person is fundamental to our feeling of obligation to treat them as persons, as well as individually important to the psyche of the recognised.

Tragically, the adamant refusal of the nation and its society to recognise this minority, and the resultant struggle for recognition faced daily by trans individuals, means that whatever history the community even has is not recorded in history books, but spoken about in hushed tones and in alleys, out of sight and unable to bother broader society with its transgressions.

BY YUKI KOH

# THE DUALITY OF OUR BEING

## GENDER IDENTITY VS SEXUAL ORIENTATION

It's a typical misconception that a person's gender identity and sexual orientation are connected – but this isn't always the case. To first iron things out: Gender identity is a self-construct; sexual orientation is a romantic construct. There's a lot more to it, but the reason why people get so fuzzy between the two is because we often take advantage of the fact that being a female or male is immediately correlated to the types of genders we are attracted to. So where does it bifurcate from here?

### EN(GENDER)ING IDENTITY

As Stoller put forth in his seminal paper on 'gender identity' in 1968, 'gender identity' refers to our personal sense of self. To put it simply, what do we identify as?

This can be complex because people think 'sex' is a direct correlate to 'gender'. But to keep it succinct, 'sex' is more biological and typically engenders being 'male' or 'female', while doing 'gender' comes with the concomitant expectations for 'men' and 'women' in most societies. Hence, 'gender identity' can often refer to a person's identified 'sex' and the accompanying expectations for their gendered role – though of course, this may not always be the

case. Sometimes, people expressly display gendered behaviour they may not identify with.

In the recent years, this concept has taken on an increasingly nuanced dimension to it, expanding to include transgenders, non-binary and genderqueer people. Mind you, a lack of conformity to one's gender-at-birth does not allow one to beat down on people who identify themselves as the gender that does not correlate with their one at birth. They are definitely not any less valid than someone who has been born that gender at birth. Let's make that clear. Identity isn't – or very rarely is – a choice for people.



### UNTANGLING THESE IDEAS

To really concretise these concepts, here's an example: a person has opted to identify as a 'male', which diverges from their birth as a 'female'. Their gender identity is therefore 'male', and this suggests that they may be more inclined to perform masculine acts, or continue to behave the way they usually do: both are fine.

From here, their sexual orientation can be any of the ones listed above. For the ease of this example, they are a homosexual, which means that they identify as a male who is romantically and sexually attracted to other males.

### SEXING IT UP

'Sexual orientation' commonly refers to one's romantic and/or sexual attraction to a person from a certain gender. 'Certain' is used here because the choices are invariably too different to state, and there's no point in confining it.

Today, we have four main categories: heterosexuality (opposite gender), homosexuality (same gender), bisexuality (both genders), and asexuality (lack of sexual attraction – not necessarily a lack of romantic attraction). Along the way, there are also more nuanced categories like pansexuality, where people are attracted to others regardless of that person's gender identity.



### TAKE IT EASY

People often abuse traditional gender and sexual ideals like it's a vanguard for propriety – but it really isn't. As we know it, such concepts have morphed over the years, and we've barely skimmed the surface of it's multi-faceted, self-reifying entity. Rather than restrict ourselves to traditional concepts that are often abused to oppress people, let's embrace what's natural to us, take it easy, and ride the rolling waves of sex and gender movements. There'll always be more to come.

by lindsay wong

# beyond male/female gender fluidity in kpop

K-pop is known for pushing the boundaries of masculinity as male idols are considered by the media to be more feminine, particularly in terms of how they look and dress. This has had both a positive and negative impact - while idols are applauded for daring to go out of their comfort zone, they are also targeted by the media for refusing to adhere to traditional expectations of beauty and fashion. Some idols are notable for the ways in which they go against gender norms and how outspoken they are about it.

## g-dragon

G-Dragon is known for his androgynous aesthetic and is lauded as one of the first K-pop idols to challenge gender norms. As a fashion pioneer, he has worn womenswear to prove that men can rock any look and outfit, no matter what gender they are assigned to. G-Dragon has been wearing skirts and carrying handbags since 2012, as well as rocking avant-garde hairstyles. In November 2020,

G-Dragon appeared on the cover of *Vogue* 2020, donning multiple pearl necklaces and a Chanel lace top. He has stated that when it comes to fashion, he does not consider gender and pays attention to how it looks instead.



Fashion pioneer  
G-Dragon

## amber liu

Arguably, female Kpop idols continue to struggle to break through barriers as they tend to be more vulnerable to criticism by the media and netizens, considering the fact that the Asian entertainment industry is more conservative. Female idols are expected to appear elegant and charming before the public's eyes. Former f(x) member Amber Liu has always rejected these ideals and worn clothes that she feels comfortable in, despite backlash and hate from netizens. Since the beginning of her career, Amber has not dressed up like other idols - she maintained a short haircut and frequently worn pants. She is outspoken in staying true to oneself instead of adhering to societal expectations.



Breaking the mould

## wu'est's ren

Ren from NU'EST made headlines on K-pop entertainment news sites when he modeled skirts and dresses for a gender-neutral Chinese shopping mall. The fact that he had long hair caused many to misgender him and question his sexuality. Eventually, Ren had to make an Instagram post to confirm that he was a man. In the K-pop industry, Ren is known for championing self-love and open-mindedness, making him even more admirable to fans. He has never been ashamed of his androgynous looks and even uses makeup and dresses in drag for advertisements and performances. Most recently, in July 2020, alongside 2AM's Jo Kwon, Astro's MJ, and actor Shin Joo-hyup, Ren took turns to take on the lead role in the Korean version of the musical 'Everybody's Talking About Jamie,' which features a protagonist who dreams of becoming a drag queen.



Gender-neutral  
Ren



Nail Art fanatic  
Lee Hongki

## lee hongki

The FTISLAND member is not only passionate about music and acting - he loves nail art. When FTISLAND's song 'Hello Hello' was released in 2011, Hongki started performing regularly with nail art on stage. Nail art has traditionally been a trend amongst women, so Hongki did receive backlash. However, this did not deter his passion and he even published the 'Lee Hong Ki Nail Book' two years later. The book went on to become a bestseller in South Korea, China, and Japan.

## taemin

When SHINee first debuted, Taemin stood out for his long hair and jokingly apologised for being 'too pretty', but he certainly is not apologising anymore, one decade later. As the main dancer of SHINee and a successful solo artist, Taemin has used his music and corresponding choreography to convey emotions and has incorporated both feminine and masculine gestures in his hit song 'Move', for example. He uses dance to marry masculinity and femininity. He never shies away from being described as 'pretty' and instead embraces it. Taemin often wears genderfluid clothes for stage performances and in his music videos.



Using dance to marry  
femininity and  
masculinity

BY LYDIA TAN

# A DIFFERENT TYPE OF 'BIAS': DOUBLE STANDARDS IN KPOP

As much as Kpop is well-loved for its glitz and glamour, it comes at a cost as well. The high standards to which idols are held have resulted in a double standard in how the industry and fans treat or perceive them. In most cases, female idols are the victims of these unfair judgements. We explore some examples of these double standards in Kpop.



Rainbow

## CROSSING THE LINE OF SEX APPEAL

When it comes to Kpop, the idea of 'sex sells' doesn't always apply across the board. Many girl groups have gotten their songs banned on certain broadcasting channels for 'provocative' or 'suggestive' dance moves. One example was Rainbow with their 2012 comeback 'A', which involved the girls lifting up their shirts to reveal their abs in the chorus. As a result, the girls had to modify their choreography on some stages by removing the shirt-lifting action.

On the other hand, boy groups often get away with more than just showing skin. You can expect to see them doing more provocative choreography that could be an instant no-no for girl groups. For boy groups, these types of performances are viewed as a form of fanservice for all the thirsty fangirls. However, for the girl groups, the public often has a more negative impression of them, labelling them as 'try-hards' and other derogatory terms.



ATEEZ



Jennie



Krystal

## IF LOOKS COULD KILL

Idols have their faces on camera almost 24/7, which is why looks are such a big deal and are heavily scrutinised in the Kpop industry. For example, Blackpink member Jennie and Krystal from the now-disbanded girl group f(x) are known for their chic expressions on and off stage. However, people have interpreted their RBF as being 'cold' or constantly pissed. As a result, they are disliked for their seemingly snobby 'attitude', even though their personalities

are nothing like that in reality.

For the boys, when they have more stoic expressions, you can see fans swooning over their piercing glares and haughty smirks. Idols like EXO's Sehun and VIXX's Leo are known for their naturally stern features which have become distinctive traits that fans love. In fact, fans will be quick to defend their male idols if any haters try and label them negatively.



Naeun

## TO SPEAK UP OR NOT TO SPEAK UP?



Joy

With Korea's conservative culture, it's already hard enough for idols to be publicly outspoken on controversial topics what more indirectly. However, the reactions towards male and female idols showing their support for certain issues differ greatly.

When Red Velvet's Joy uploaded Instagram photos of her wearing a shirt that said 'We Should All Be Feminists' or when Apink's Naeun went to brunch with a phone case with the words 'Girls Can Do Anything' on it, they were bombarded with anti-feminist sentiments from netizens. People called them out for destroying their groups' reputations by indirectly promoting these sensitive subjects on their platforms.

One clear case of idols receiving biased judgements for the same issue was surrounding the controversial feminist novel Kim Ji Young. Born 1982 by Cho Namjo. Idols like BTS' RM and Red Velvet's Irene have mentioned reading this book, but netizens' reactions were vastly different. Male fans posted pictures of them burning or cutting up Irene's photocards, whereas there wasn't as much of an uproar in RM's case.



Irene



Sehun



Leo

In the competitive Kpop industry, it's inevitable that idols are always going to be compared and judged differently by fans. These expectations of how male and female idols are supposed to act and look might seem old-fashioned but they are still upheld by fans even today. That just goes to show that if we want to see any changes in the way idols are treated and perceived within the industry, it truly starts with the fans.

## THE PHENOMENON OF FEMMEPHOBIA

# Fear of Feminine

BY NINA GAN

When you think of the word ‘feminine’, it immediately makes you think of someone who’s soft, emotional, sensitive, graceful, innocent, and also nurturing and co-dependent. Hence, the word ‘femmephobia’ is associated with the fear and hatred of all things feminine – the behavior, the way they present themselves, and even the colour pink and the act of crying. While ‘misogyny’ is the hatred of women, ‘femmephobia’ is the fear and hatred of things commonly associated with women.

The idea of femmephobia devalues everything associated with women and their femininity because society still equates ‘feminine’ with ‘less than’ – femme people are perceived as weaker, more objectified, infantilised, and so on. And while misogynists are men with a hatred of women, femmephobia can be experienced by both men and women as an act of misogyny.

### TOXIC MASCULINITY AND VIOLENCE

The devaluing of femininity is a social problem with serious consequences – it can manifest as internalised misogyny and externalised as shaming, policing, and even violence. For example, most trans people murdered in the USA in 2015 were femme. Three of the largest massacres in Canada (Montreal, Toronto, Nova Scotia) have been categorised as misogynistic attacks.

The men who commit violence out of femmephobia project heteropatriarchal masculinity – one that society embraces as the ‘alpha’ of gender hierarchy. According to Rhea Hoskin, scholar at Queens University in Ontario, hegemonic masculinity is elevated in society often through the subordination of women or less powerful men. Those who are femme are assumed to be either a woman or someone interested in attracting men’s attention, therefore the idea of femininity is seen as something cultivated for men’s consumption.

Femmephobia places children in danger because once young boys are perceived to be feminine, they immediately become targets of harassment, bullying, and violence – sometimes even from their own family members.

### VIOLENCE AGAINST TRANSGENDER

Femmephobia has far reaching effects for the LGBTQ community, particularly the transgender, where it’s linked to transphobia. Transgender women endure oppression in forms of violence or mockery, perhaps even more so than cisgendered women, for simply embracing their gender identity outside the constraints of masculinity.

Violence is often perpetuated by misogynistic men who’re internally feeling “why doesn’t this person want to be a man?” or worse, perceive trans women as men looking to attract and trick men.

Trans men fare no better – many who’ve undergone surgery will often try to be hypermasculine in order to avoid being called a fraud. Trans men who show a hint of femininity, like wearing nail polish or makeup, are often labelled ‘transtrenders’ – a slur for someone who becomes trans as a fad. They’re often judged on whether they’re masculine enough. Trans men are sometimes denied gender-affirming surgery like hysterectomies because doctors assume they’d eventually give birth.

### WHAT IT MEANS FOR MEN

For men, presenting as femme has harsher backlash. While a ‘tomboy’ girl is more tolerated by her parents and peers, a boy who has feminine tendencies is often labelled a ‘sissy’ and is likely to be bullied by both boys and girls. While there have been many entities encouraging women to get into traditionally male-dominated fields like STEM, you won’t find as many entities trying to get boys into female-dominated programmes like dance or gender studies. While women can wear boxers and a tie like it’s fashionable, men who don panties and skirts are seen as having a mental problem.

The idea of ‘masculinity’ is keenly policed in the West – boys are often told to ‘man up’ and not cry, while grown men who hug each other or cross-dress are ridiculed as ‘gay’. Femmephobia dictates that men distance themselves from femininity to seem authentic, so if eating salads or liking Taylor Swift are for women, then ‘real’ men should avoid them.

### WHAT IT MEANS FOR WOMEN

For women, femmephobia is a conundrum. If she wears miniskirts and talks about boys, she’d be judged as being a bimbo – even though society has conditioned women to adopt an image of ‘femininity’ through decades of marketing (how many facial product or slimming centre ads have you seen lately?). The irony is that if she’s too masculine, she’d be perceived as a dyke, which has negative connotations.

However, between a bimbo and a dyke, women have a much larger range of gender identity to play with compared to men. She could wear a dress or jeans, play soccer or watch Kdramas; no one would bat an eyelid.

While in most nations hyper feminine women are sometimes mocked, in Asian societies like Japan and Korea, the more hyper-feminine a woman, the more valued she is in the eyes of men. You can see this in its pop culture influences where girls in anime often have high-pitched voices and demure personalities, or in K-pop where female idols have to adhere to strict feminine behavior. Women in these cases are objectified and infantilised –

This behavior spills over to the gay male community too, which valorises the hypermasculine while demonising, rejecting, and shaming the feminine. It’s not uncommon to find gay dating profiles listing preferences as “no femmes, queens or flamers”, while some gay clubs specifically bar entry to femme-presenting men.

This discrimination against femme gay men rose partly in opposition to caricaturish feminine representations of homosexuality in mainstream media where they’re often ‘emasculated’ as being lesser men. As a response, gay men used hypermasculinity – by bulking up at the gym – in order to place themselves on par with straight masculinity, if not above. By trying to prove they could be as much of a man, or assimilate with straight culture, they grew to loathe or reject not only women, but any trait of femininity.

and it’s perceived as the norm, so rather than femmephobia, these nations are considered more femme-philic.

When it comes to discrimination, femmephobia plays a big role in traditionally male-dominated spaces like the tech industry. Women tend to police themselves in order to cope with the worst aspects of the toxic misogynist culture they work in – they would avoid presenting too ‘femme’ for fear of not being taken seriously. For video game designer Christine Love, femmephobia in misogynistic tech spaces is not about privileging men, it’s privileging masculinity.

While femininity is often self-policed by women in male-dominated spaces, the way it’s presented in gay and lesbian women has startling consequences that begin in childhood. Data from the Rainbow Women’s Project in the US – a survey of women who identify as lesbian/gay and bisexual – showed that 40% of women who identified as ‘butch’ reported significantly greater childhood emotional and physical neglect, while those who were more ‘femme’ reported significantly more forced adult sex.

### THE ISSUE AT LARGE

Like rape culture, sexism, and transmisogyny, femmephobia is deeply imbedded and systemic to the point of becoming a cultural norm that manifests as a bias against femininity in society. Masculine and feminine traits coexist within everyone, regardless of gender, and modern culture has forced masculinity to be at odds with femininity.

Femmephobia cannot simply be conquered overnight – a reset requires introspection. To combat this cultural oppression, we as a society need to value femininity and adopt its positive traits like compassion and tolerance. It would change how we interact with one another, and how we value individuality, for a start.

It's not a stretch to say that once women identify themselves as "feminists," they'd almost always be labelled a "man hater" even if it's far from the truth. This term has been so commonly and even flippantly used that many now view it to be a mere platitude.

Perhaps this stems from the problem that many of us still haven't grasped the true meaning of being a "feminist". Many women say that they believe in feminism, but end up indulging in what many would consider "misandry". However, the concept of feminism – and gender equality – shouldn't just be fought by women. Men have a big part to play as well.

### WHAT IS FEMINISM?

It should be noted that "feminism" is defined as "the belief that women are and should be treated as potential intellectual and social equals to men" (Urban Dictionary). Seeing that feminists should be helping to raise the social standing of women to be on par with our gender counterparts, it is essential that everyone understand that empowering women does not equate to disparaging the importance of the opposite gender.

In fact, the role that males play in our society is of utmost importance if we wish to emancipate women and reduce gender disparity. We need to fathom that males CAN indeed be feminists as well. In a world where men are still valued over women, there's a need for the opposite sex to believe in the cause and help to fight for women's rights. Women cannot and should not be veering towards this goal on their own.



### HOW MEN CAN BE PART OF THE SOLUTION

At its worst, there are many cases of girls and women who've had to suffer in silence due to domestic violence or verbal abuse from their spouses, or even get sexually harassed by strangers. This is a situation that we absolutely cannot condone. Sexism against women extends to the workplace too, where they consistently make less than men for the same job, or are ridiculed for being too "assertive."

# Cheat Sheet

#69 Men and Feminism



I'm a feminist



Many men don't routinely exhibit sexist behaviour or enact violence, but they can consider how to play an active part in promoting change and in encouraging other men to do so. For men the first step to fighting for feminism is recognising their own privilege. Men shouldn't tolerate violence, aggression, and bullying or participate in male camaraderie built on mocking women and the different. Instead, they can play an important role in challenging other men over their sexism, misogyny, and violence by calling it out, supporting victims, or bearing witness.

In his book "Why Feminism is Good for Men," Dutch activist Jens van Tricht argues that feminism is not just about improving the perception of women, but also about freeing men (and women) from the restrictive gender "codes" that hold them back. Feminism can facilitate the shift towards more co-operative and equal relationships and friendships, reduce violence, and eradicate the toxic masculinity.

### AGAINST PATRIARCHY, NOT MEN

Some women and women's organisations may fear that attempts to engage men will distract from the primary task of empowering women, or that "men will take over" women-led actions and campaigns.

However, people need to recognise that being a feminist does not entail belittling the opposite sex. As Canadian author Justine Musk writes, "The enemy of feminism isn't men. It's patriarchy, and patriarchy is not men. It is a system, and women can support the system of patriarchy just as men can support the fight for gender equality."

In her speech to support gender equality for the He For She Campaign, which was supported by the UN, Emma Watson said, "It is time that we all see gender as a spectrum instead of two sets of opposing ideals."

Women should all work towards invigorating not just women, but men too. Only with united support from both sides can we truly make a change to achieve sustained gender egalitarianism for all, and make our society a better place to live.

I AM AGAINST PATRIARCHY NOT MEN

By Yin Loon

# Who Talks More?

## DO WOMEN TALK MORE IN MEETINGS?

"When you increase the number of female executive members, if their speaking time isn't restricted to a certain extent, they have difficulty finishing, which is annoying."



This now-infamous line, uttered by Mr. Yoshiro Mori, leader of the Tokyo Olympics organising committee, sparked plenty of backlash in Japan and around the world after a virtual meeting on February 3. He resigned from the committee over the remarks only after he was pressured to do so.

So, do women really not know when to stop talking? When asked at a news conference if he thought women talked too much, Mori responded, "I don't listen to women that much lately, so I don't know."

### BURSTING THE BUBBLE

Rather than ask an octogenarian misogynist about women's speech behaviors, let's look at research instead.

In the book, "The Silent Sex: Gender, Deliberation, and Institutions", political scientists find that when groups of five make democratic decisions, if only one member is a woman, she speaks 40% less than each man. Only when there's four women do they each have equal air time.

Why is this so? Because gender stereotypes dictate that if a man who talks too much, he's just confident, while a woman who does so is too aggressive or controlling. Women face the harsh reality that it's better to stay silent and be thought polite than speak up and jeopardise their careers. Perhaps this reality is best encapsulated by Mori, who states that the Tokyo committee has "about 7 women at the organising committee, but everyone understands their place."

### THE CULT OF "MAN INTERRUPTING"

Coined by journalist Jessica Bennett, the idea of "man interrupting" is when men interrupt women who're talking. While widespread, what counts as an "interruption" is a matter of interpretation.

A recent study, conducted by Stanford linguist Katherine Hilton, had 5,000 Americans listen to men and women interrupt, with identical scripts. It found that male listeners were more likely to view women who interrupted another speaker as ruder, less friendly, and less intelligent than the men who interjected –

despite using the exact same words. The women listeners, however, viewed both male and female interrupters the same way. Clearly, there's a gender gap in what counts as an interruption.

### THE PERFORMANCE INDEX

In a study of over 100,000 leaders, published in American Psychological Association's journal *PsychNet*, men were rated as more confident in their own leadership skills, but women were rated as more competent leaders by others. Women also outscored men on 17 of 19 key leadership capabilities when evaluated by their bosses, according to Harvard Business Review.

The reality is that women perform just as well as men when they're both paid to solve problems, according to a study published in the *Quarterly Journal of Economics*. However, when they're competing against men, women become reluctant to compete.

The core idea of a patriarchal culture is that masculinity is hard to win, but easy to lose. A man's ego is related to his superiority and strength, and an assertive woman can be a threat to this fragile ego. So it's not like women perform worse because men are superior, but because women have to walk a tightrope – they need to disagree without seeming disagreeable, raise their voices without shouting, for fear of shattering that ego.

According to psychiatrist Vijay Nagaswami, "Any ego that derives itself from the perceived superiority of one gender over the other is bound to be incomplete and fragile."

### THE MYTH BUSTED

To sum it up, the idea of women talking more at meetings is a total myth. If men perceive that to be the truth, then they truly need to be better listeners so that women wouldn't need to have to master extra skills dancing around eggshells during meetings in order to succeed within the shackles of gender stereotypes.

by Vincent Tan

# PINKS, BLUES, & GENDER CUES

## COLOUR PREFERENCE ACCORDING TO GENDER

We almost always assume that gender preferences are inbuilt. Girls naturally prefer pink and boys naturally prefer blue, it is said. Anecdotal evidence tells us this, and science to a degree often reinforced the idea.

However after decades of study, historian Jo Paoletti showed that in the US at least, from the early 1900s to the 1980s, fashion trends were largely reversed, with young girls often dressed in 'dainty' blue and young boys frequently attired in 'stronger' pink. In fact, according to research by psychologist Dr Eva Heller, the most preferred colour for both adult genders is blue by a wide margin.

To a modern mind, this complete reverse-assignment of the perceived 'masculine' and 'feminine' suggests that things we currently perceive as gender qualities, whether it be colour preference or behavioural traits, are not absolute, but in fact often arbitrarily assigned (by society) and then socialised into acceptance.

### WHY IS PINK 'GIRLY'?

Even casual observation tells us pink is not automatically seen as feminine in other cultures – for example, Italian men's fashion frequently features pink, while in Japan, China and S. Korea, wearing pink doesn't mark you as a 'girl'.

If you have nieces or nephews, you'll find that babies from 4 to 24 months old tend to have a unified preference for red – this is because that's the colour they can recognise first.

According to research, both girls and boys are attracted to primary colours, starting with red, then blue, and then green and yellow. It's not until the child grows older do they tend to express more preference towards gender-biased colours. When they're old enough to want toys, it's not uncommon for girls to lean towards red or pink.

So where does this bias come from?

Gender-based marketing to impressionable young minds may have a part to play – children know their gender

identity by about age 2 – which means if they know they're 'girls', society at large likely starts programming them at some level, to generally prefer pink. Why? Look at toy stores and children's clothing stores, and how they segregate by colours – when was the last time you saw a pink G. I. Joe? For an individual child, this process means looking around them and reasoning: "Girls wear pink. I'm a girl. I must like pink."

With exposure to colour-gender association at such a young age, is it any surprise that children accept the colour assigned to the gender as natural?

According to the Smithsonian, colour-segregated gender marketing started just before WWI, and did not settle on the present blue and pink gender assignments until the 1940s. The development of this popular myth is similar to how Coca-Cola built up the overtly commercialised image of Santa Claus we know today, until it became the standard representation of St. Nick used across the English-speaking world.

### COLOUR IS A MARKETING INFLUENCE

Without marketing influence, would we associate pink products with femininity? What are the negative repercussions? For one, reinforcing the idea of gender differences reinforces gender stereotypes. After all, stereotypes inevitably result in the social evil of discrimination towards people who do not conform.

What would you think if you saw a guy dressed in a pink suit, carrying a pink briefcase and driving a pink Bentley? Now imagine if he was dressed in a blue suit, blue briefcase and blue Bentley. The only difference is the colour, but that would no doubt taint most people's outlook. Would he be any less successful, capable, or even masculine?

So next time you get a pink umbrella, you don't have to be embarrassed by it if you're a guy – you're just saying that you're not influenced by gender-biased marketing. Instead you can remind yourself that men who wear pink can actually have an edge, as shown by a 2012 study commissioned by Cotton USA, in which dudes who don pink earn USD1,600 more per year than their more conservative brothers who stick to traditional blue or white shirts.

By Nina Gan

## Housewives & Firemen

### How our language is still sexist

These days, there may be more female CEOs, stay-at-home dads or folks labelling themselves as gender fluid, but one thing hasn't caught up with the times: our language. If you examine the English language, you'll discover plenty of engendered usage. Male pronouns – he, his, him – are habitually used when the sex of the person is unknown, unless when referring to roles like secretary, nurse or elementary school teacher, when the pronoun changes to 'she'.

This sexism could be rooted in Old English; 'woman' was a neuter noun, so when referring to a woman, you'd call her 'it'. Norse speakers (who used female pronouns) changed that when they populated Northern England. Today, kids learn about house-wife, or fire-man, indicating gender-specific roles, meaning it may not simply be the society that's ingraining these gender identities, it's the language we use.

### WORDS CAN CHANGE STATUS

Male titles usually speak of power and status, while the female versions often reduce women to a subordinate position even though at one point they were actually equals.

**Mistress:** It's the female equivalent of 'master', meaning someone with authority. These days, it refers to a female sexual companion to a married man.

**Governess:** Compared to a 'governor', a governess today has no authority over a place or institution, as this role refers to a woman responsible for the care of children.

**Madam:** This female equivalent of 'sir' (a person of high rank) is commonly used as a mode of address, but in the worst case scenario, it also means a 'female manager of a brothel'.

### TOUGH FOR MEN TOO

Of course, the gender inequality swings both ways. There are male nurses, flight attendants, and secretaries, but to add a 'male' in front of their job title only seems to demean their position.

Then there are phrases like 'man up' – which berates men who show their emotional side – and 'grow a pair', to goad men into being braver. The word 'pair', refers to testicles, which is a standard measure of masculinity.

Incidentally, if you used the phrase 'you don't have the balls' in Italy, you could be fined, because it suggests that the person lacks the one thing that defines him as male. Who knew that men would be so... sensitive?

### ROLES ACCORDING TO ENGLISH

Most of us grew up with words like postman, mankind, manpower, freshman. The male-based generic is an indicator of a system in which 'man' is privileged over women.

Even words like 'freshman' and 'you guys' reinforce the gender inequalities, yet women accept being considered 'freshman', or as 'you guys'. Being labelled 'one of the guys' might make women feel included, but it reinforces the message that men are the standard and that women should be subsumed by the male category.

If gender-neutral nouns were used, perhaps women wouldn't have to be seconded into groups like 'freshman', or even be fighting for a 'man's wage'.

### LANGUAGE WITH CONNOTATIONS

Some of us subliminally associate words with gender: women 'gossip' while men 'talk shop'; men are 'firm' or 'open-minded' while women are 'bossy' or 'naive'.

The phrases 'master of my fate' and 'father of modern science' both use masculine nouns to indicate positive power, whereas phrases with feminine nouns commonly imply the opposite, like 'mother of all evil'. Even the Oxford dictionary tagged 'nagging' with the word 'wife'.

To illustrate the pejoration of feminine nouns, which one of these is less attractive?

**Mary hopes to meet an eligible bachelor.**  
**Bill hopes to meet an eligible spinster.**

Both 'bachelor' and 'spinster' refer to unmarried people, and while it's socially acceptable for older men to be single, spinsters are synonymous with 'unwanted'. Let's take another female noun: bitch.

Originally meaning 'female dog', over time, it began to negatively refer to a malicious woman. But as language evolved, it's now synonymous with complaining (ie, bitching), and a man who's insulted as a 'bitch' gets angry not because it means 'malicious', but because it means 'woman'.

Derogatory words like 'whore', 'slut', and even 'the fairer sex' are exclusively reserved for women; there are no equivalent words referring to men that are even close to being offensive.

### USE NEUTRAL LANGUAGE

With the changes in the role of women and men in society, there is less space for sexist language, so it's pertinent to adjust to a more 'neutral' one.

For example, use genderless titles, such as flight attendant instead of stewardess, and homemaker instead of housewife. Drop gender markers to titles like nurse.

Imagine Neil Armstrong's iconic quote made more politically correct: "That's one small step for a person, one giant leap for humankind."

# THE LIST

## OPENLY LGBT HEADS OF STATE

There have been few openly gay world leaders in recent history. While there have been a long list of openly LGBT holders of political office, to date, there have only been five openly LGBT people who have served as a national head of government, holding offices in Iceland, Belgium, Luxembourg, Ireland, and Serbia.



### XAVIER BETTE, LUXEMBOURG

Prime Minister (2013-present)

Following the 2018 Luxembourg general election, Xavier became the first openly gay Prime Minister in the world to be re-elected for a second term. One of his achievements was to abolish religious education in schools, replacing them with general ethics classes. He has been married to

his partner, Gauthier Destenay since 2013, the same year that same-sex marriage was introduced to Luxembourg - which is a mostly Catholic Grand Duchy. According to Xavier, "people [in Luxembourg] do not consider the fact of whether someone is gay or not."

### ANA BRNABIĆ, SERBIA

Prime Minister (2017-present)

US-educated Ana is not only the first woman to serve as Prime Minister of Serbia, she's also the first openly gay person to serve the position, and she's held onto the position since 2017. In 2019, she became the first openly gay Prime Minister whose partner gave

birth while the Prime Minister was in office. Her partner, Milica Đurđić, gave birth to a boy named Igor. In recent news, Ana has managed to secure enough Covid-19 vaccines to put Serbia ahead of all 27 EU member states in terms of vaccinations - at double the rate of Germany, Spain, and Italy.



### ELIO DI RUPO, BELGIUM

Prime Minister (2011-2014)

Elio was Belgium's first Prime Minister of non-Belgian descent (he's Italian) who came out to the public in 1996. With a PhD in chemistry, Elio is described as flamboyant and colourful, regularly sporting a distinctive red bowtie. He was the first openly gay man to lead a sovereign state, and the first openly gay person to win the position through

an election. When he was appointed Prime Minister by King Albert II in 2011, critics warned he would be the weakest PM in Belgian history, but a year later, he was credited internationally for bringing stability back to a country that was on the verge of a sovereign debt crisis.

### JÓHANNA SIGURÐARDÓTTIR, ICELAND

Prime Minister (2009-2013)

Jóhanna is Iceland's longest serving member of Parliament, having been elected an MP from 1978 to 2013. When she became Iceland's first female Prime Minister in 2009, she was also the world's first openly gay LGBT head of government. In 2012, Jóhanna announced her retirement from politics. She married her partner Jónína Leósdóttir

in 2010 when same-sex marriage was legalised in Iceland, making them one of the first same-sex married couples in Iceland. Under her leadership, she got Iceland's economy back on sound footing after the 2008 financial crisis, and pushed gender equality to the top of the political agenda with initiatives like gender budgeting.



### LEO VARADKAR, PRIME MINISTER/TAOISEACH (2017-2020)

Prime Minister/Taoiseach (2017-2020)

Leo, who is of Indian descent, was a politician who studied medicine at Trinity College Dublin. He became Ireland's first openly gay Taoiseach (Prime Minister), as well as the youngest, at 38 when he was elected in 2017. One of Leo's first acts as Taoiseach was to announce a referendum on abortion for 2018. While in office, Leo

held the highest approval rating of any Taoiseach since 2011, with government satisfaction at 41% - the highest in almost 10 years. IrishCentral called Leo the 'Taoiseach's finest hour', and many claimed he ended 2017 'on a high'. His partner, Matthew Barrett, is a doctor.



# Change in the Horizon

by Chan Choy Yu

## Asia's Shifting Gender Roles

What's your image of a typical Asian family? That the father is the one bringing home the bacon, and the mother is in charge of the household? There's more: hierarchical, patriarchal, less open with affection and with a strong emphasis on face and honour. There isn't anyone who doesn't recognise the dynamics of a traditional Asian family.



### Back Then

Patriarchy has ruled relationships for centuries. Men were biologically the stronger counterpart in a couple, and it made sense then that they were to venture out of their nests to hunt for food, while women took care of their dens and offsprings.

As time passed and society modernised, there was a rise in gender equality in the West that remained elusive in Asia. This was because of the traditional Confucian teachings of subordination seeded deeply into Asian culture, and the age-old battle between the East and the West, which prevented the spread of social views vital for equality between the sexes to develop.

It didn't help that sons were favoured as they were viewed as more advantageous to a family in terms of monetary and face value — they could help out in farms, run family businesses, contribute to the household income, receive dowries, and carry on the family lineage.

In Asian countries like China and India, the majority of the population were poor and could not afford to feed that many mouths. Not forgetting a large national population that led to the one-child policy in China, female infanticide became an unfortunately common occurrence, because to put it bluntly, raising sons were more "worth the investment". As a result, by 2050, there will be approximately 60 million more men of marriageable age than women in China and India.

### Generation Now

Today, families and relationships in Asia are no longer as patriarchal as before. As the world globalised, traditional Asian culture got infiltrated with western values and the family landscape changed. Women can now join the workforce without being frowned upon and receive higher education if they so wish.

Jobs predominantly taken on by females such as teaching and nursing are no longer as looked down upon and men are increasingly wanting in; male-dominated workplaces that are also often higher-paying are

extending more recognition and acceptance to women, from finance and business operations to medicine and science.

As education levels and financial independence rise, women are also marrying later. Mirroring the West, many wealthier nations like Japan, Singapore, and South Korea, to name a few, have women marrying at ages 29-34, and even sizable populations of women who aren't marrying at all. Almost a third of Japanese women and over one-fifth of Taiwanese women in their 30s are unmarried; in Bangkok, 20% of women aged 40-44 are single.

### What it means

Even with all the progression and changes in the typical Asian family unit, it cannot be said that patriarchy has taken a backseat yet. Glass ceilings still very much exist, and being a househusband is still taboo. Women might be allowed to go out and earn their keep, but society by and large still expects them to continue managing household affairs.

Until Asia is able to graduate from battling with gender inequality to figuring out gender neutrality (that's a whole new ballgame), ageing populations, slower economic growth, and even an increase in crime rates — yes, marriage actually socialises men and lowers levels of testosterone and criminal behaviour — are just some things that Asia has to deal with.



By Nina Gan

# MEN > WOMEN

## WHY A.I. IS STILL SEXIST

We live in interesting times, when the technologies we see in movies are fast becoming reality. One technology that has made it into the real world is artificial intelligence (AI), which is becoming increasingly present in our day-to-day lives. From chatbots at call centres to image recognition software in your search engine and even your email spam filter, AI is definitely here to stay.

But relying on AI can be risky, not because there's a fear of a "robot uprising" – it's more because of its inherent sexism. This is because it's based on machine learning, and much of that learning comes from imitating human behaviour.

### THE SEXIST LANGUAGE OF AI

Artificial Intelligence is a product of machine learning – a function of monkey see, monkey do. One of the ways AI learns is through Natural Language Processing (NLP) which combs through linguistic data to interpret outcomes using mathematical models.

The problems come when an NLP's algorithm gives us gender-biased outcomes simply because of the language it's learning from, and the English language is inherently sexist.

Firstly, masculine nouns and pronouns are often used to refer to both men and women (ie. man-kind, king-dom, etc), and it's only relatively recently that we used gender-neutral words, like firefighters instead of firemen.

Machine learning algorithms aren't sophisticated enough to pick up nuances. For instance, take the words "king" and "queen": one

is a royal male, and the other is a woman married to the king. While we also use "queen" to describe a woman leading a kingdom by herself, a machine can't understand the idea of a queen ruling a masculine king-dom.

Secondly, ingrained sexism has trained our collective societies to hold onto outmoded gender roles. For example, we associate "doctor" with men, and "nurse" with women because of the social perception humans have of the jobs.

The K-nearest neighbours (KNN) algorithm illustrates just how sexist our language is: in the man subgroup you'll find adjectives like cocky, brilliant, or clever and jobs like banker, headmaster, physicist and thug. Women, instead, are described as sassy, sexy, and gorgeous with jobs like nurse, receptionist, pediatrician, and...prostitute.

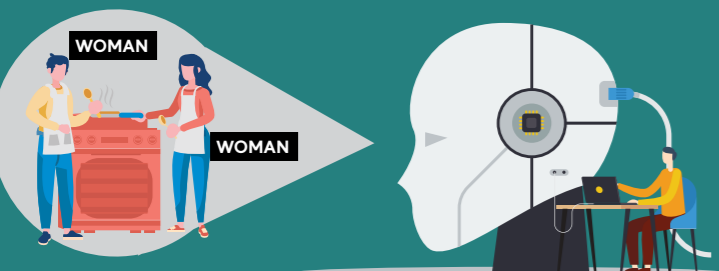
### HOW DOES IT AFFECT YOU?

As we move further into an automated world where we are increasingly reliant on incorruptible and dedicated workers, we're giving everyday tasks that could be discriminatory because they copy human behaviours.

For example, Amazon's AI system was found to discriminate against women in their hiring process, and despite multiple attempts to correct the algorithm, Amazon scrapped the AI because it could not "unlearn" this bias.

Skewing the hiring process is just one aspect – bias in algorithms can also lead to discrimination in loan applications, medical diagnoses, and even the criminal justice system. When governments use tools like facial recognition for criminal profiling, it can have life-and-death ramifications.

With gender inequality still deeply rooted in our society, machine learning algorithms run the risk of propagating and amplifying all our biases. This could have alarming consequences especially when we put our blind trust in AI in many different decision-making scenarios.



### SEEING SEXISM

AI also has an inherent bias in detecting and deciphering images. Using deep neural networks to identify images, modelled after the network of neurons in your brain, these systems learn to recognise faces by analysing many millions of pre-labelled photos.

In an analysis of two large collections of photos used to "train" image-recognition software, University of Virginia researchers found that AI would display gender bias in their depiction of activities: images of shopping and washing are linked to women, while coaching and shooting are tied to men. Machine-learning software trained on the datasets didn't just mirror those biases, it amplified them – the researchers' paper includes a photo of a man at a stove labeled "woman."

Meanwhile, researchers at Carnegie Mellon University and George Washington University found that AI systems were more likely to create professional images of men (wearing business or career attire) while generating sexualised images of women (wearing bikinis or low-cut tops).



By Nina Gan

# Manly Steaks & Feminine Salads

## GENDERING OF FOOD

### Boys are built different from girls

It's not a stretch to imagine that most guys love their meat – whether it's a burger or a beef rendang. Some of this preference for meat over other foods can be explained by evolution, according to Yale University's David Katz.

Men, as hunters, needed more protein to build muscle mass, so meat was a reward. Over time, this created different caloric requirements between the two sexes, because prehistoric men and women had differing access to foods. A study by Hank Rothgerber of Bellarmine University revealed that men are more pro-meat than women because of its protein value (among other findings).

Men are also much less likely to eat their veggies than women, particularly when they feel healthy. Women, on the other hand, are much better at consuming their greens, according to a National Cancer Institute survey.

Even hormonal differences could explain why men generally prefer stronger food flavours than women. Women, especially those of reproductive age, are more sensitive to flavours than men, according to multiple studies.

### Cultural priming is the culprit

What we eat goes back to the idea of priming – how culture imprints concepts in our minds through old-fashioned gender-based marketing. According to the gospel of advertising, women like dieting, desserts, and looking nice, whereas men like beer, sports, and meat. It suggests that women should be 'dainty' while men should be 'macho'.

You'll see that beer commercials always depict men drinking beer while enjoying sports or hanging out with the boys. Commercials for yogurt will teach you that it's exclusively eaten by women (usually to attract men). This form of gendered advertising goes way back to the 1940s, where ads usually depicted women as cooks and men as beer drinkers.

Do men really prefer steaks and pizzas while ladies prefer salads and cute desserts? You don't really have to look far to find your answer – crowds at salad bars will usually have more female patrons than males, and conversely at affordable steak restaurants, groups of men dominate. You'll also find that men are averse to dining at dessert cafes by themselves (or in a group of men).

In an experiment titled 'Macho Nachos' got participants to rate foods as masculine and feminine – baked vs fried chicken, baked potatoes vs fries, baked vs fried fish, etc. The results are unsurprising: people were more likely to see the healthier options as masculine, and the healthier options as feminine. Why is this so?

Despite societal changes over the years, food historians Laura Shapiro and Harvey Levenstein have noted that the depiction of male and female tastes in advertising has remained consistent, even with new ingredients and foods. Healthy food fads like kale and quinoa are gendered as "female," while bacon, bourbon, and "adventurous foods" – like insects – are branded as "masculine."

Our evaluation of food isn't always about the food itself, but the packaging it comes in. Researchers from the University of Manitoba investigated reactions to gendered differences in food packaging. Unsurprisingly, those labelled with healthy options are often seen as more feminine, with the opposite perceived as masculine. Researchers also defied conventional gender stereotypes by placing the word "mega" alongside a photo of a ballerina, and the word "health" alongside a football image. As expected, participants found them confusing. This experiment shows that when healthy food is packaged with masculine imagery, there's a violation.

### Defying gendered foods

Many of us at least recognise that we associate food with gender. A 2007 New York Times article noted a trend of young women ordering steak on first dates, and it was a way to reassure men that, should a relationship flower, their girlfriends won't lecture them about their food choices.

There is no doubt that many of us defy these food preference stereotypes; we shouldn't not eat certain foods because it's perceived as masculine or feminine. We already unnecessarily associate so many things with gender – ie. pink is for girls – so why is there a need to associate our basic source of sustenance too?



by Ci En

# WEIRD NATURE

## UNUSUAL SEX & GENDER ROLES IN THE ANIMAL KINGDOM

Gender and the roles that come with it are often determined from the sexual organs that develop during gestation. In humans, there are traditionally fixed stereotypes to gender and its roles. While a shift in gender roles can usually be understood, the stigma to sex change remains. But, whether it is due to environmental pollution or for survival, sex (and gender role) change is not an uncommon phenomenon among other animals.



### SEAHORSES

Males carry eggs in their own bellies, and subsequently hatch the young.

**HOW:** Unlike a homo sapiens' act of depositing the sperm into the uterus, the female of this species deposits the eggs into the male's pouch. The eggs are then fertilised in his pouch where they are nurtured until they hatch.

**WHY:** Females need more time to make eggs so this ensures the survival of their species. By sharing the responsibility of the reproductive process – from production to delivery – they can maximise the rate of survival.



### BEARDED DRAGONS

They perform a sex reversal in the egg.

**HOW:** When warm temperatures occur during egg incubation, male bearded dragons often reverse course to become female, but not completely. They remain male genetically, but act and reproduce like females and lay twice as many eggs as normal females.

**WHY:** It is believed that this form of sex determination, also known as temperature-dependent sensitive determination (TSD), is most common in the reptile family. Certain temperatures create the optimum conditions for the nurturing of a specific sex, so this form of sex determination is to increase its chances of survival. Male bearded dragons are currently undergoing sex reversal at a rising rate, likely due to the spike in global temperatures.

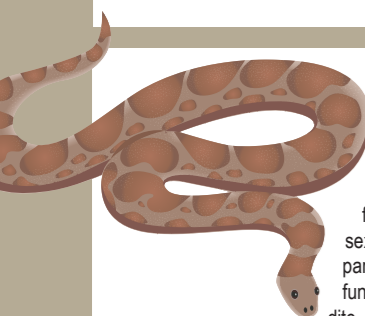


### CLOWNFISH

Clownfish are all born with male sexual organs. However, as they get older, the most dominant fish in the group will develop female sexual organs to mate with the other fishes.

**HOW:** When you put four clownfish in a tank, the biggest and most dominant fish in this tank will develop female genitals and mate with the other three male fish. The scientific terminology for the sex change from male to female is known as 'protandry'.

**WHY:** Following the survival of the fittest theory, this is to ensure that the most stellar baby clownfish would be produced. Since eggs need more resources to produce, it's logical that the job for this is more suited for the biggest and strongest fish.



### COPPERHEAD SNAKES

The females are capable of virgin birth.

**HOW:** Female snakes, like some reptiles, can fertilise their own eggs without the need for male sexual partners, in a reproductive term called parthenogenesis. While she carries out the reproductive functions of both sexes at once, she's not a hermaphrodite. With facultative parthenogenesis, a special cell called a polar body that's produced with an egg sometimes acts like a sperm to "fertilise" it.

**WHY:** Parthenogenesis is an adaptive strategy to ensure the reproduction when conditions are not favourable for sexual reproduction. Asexual reproduction can be advantageous to organisms that must remain in a particular environment and in places where mates are scarce.



### SNAILS

When two snails come together, both get impregnated.

**HOW:** Most species of snails are hermaphroditic, and when two snails come into contact, they 'shoot' each other with calciferous love darts (which deliver hormones) before sperm is transferred reciprocally. In many species, both mating snails will lay eggs.

**WHY:** A school of thought believes that because the snail moves slowly, it'd be too unproductive to go around finding an opposite sex to mate. Thus, they have both female and male sexual organs to speed up the mating process to increase their chances of survival.

# STRESS RELIEF

## Chick Flick OR Action Movie

**LEVEL 1:** Guess if these quotes are from chick flicks or action movies

**LEVEL 2:** Match the quotes to the movie titles below

### MOVIE QUOTES

"Has the fact that you're completely psycho managed to escape your attention?"

"You've Got To Ask Yourself One Question: Do I Feel Lucky?"

"I'm going to have to ask you to exit the donut."

"There's no such thing as ready. You just jump on a moving train and you try not to die."

"If you're a bird, I'm a bird."

"Let's put a smile on that face."

"Don't think you are, know you are."

"You and I are such similar creatures, Vivian. We both screw people for money."

"Look away! What did we eat?! The sink's a goner! It's comin' outta me like lava!"

"You're not the man I knew ten years ago."

"Put the bunny back in the box."

"You can't lose something you never had."

### MOVIE TITLES

HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS

THE NOTEBOOK

THE DARK KNIGHT

PRETTY WOMAN

10 THINGS I HATE ABOUT YOU

DIRTY HARRY

CON AIR

THE MATRIX

BRIDESMAIDS

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU'RE EXPECTING

IRON MAN 2

RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK

## GENDER ISSUE

