

6th Sense

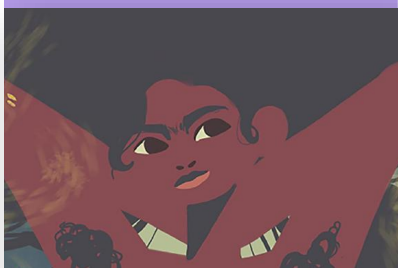
#BalanceForBetter

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY



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6th Sense is proudly brought to you by the students of Clapton Girls' Sixth Form. All credit goes to the amazing students who contributed, from the incredibly thought-provoking articles to the details of the art pieces.

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#BalanceForBetter

Flowers and Feminism

Gabriella Bandeira

Foreword, for Readers who have not read *Mrs Dalloway*, the summary of Merry M. Pawlowski: *'[...] Society hostess, Clarissa Dalloway is giving a party. Her thoughts and sensations on that one day, and the interior monologues of others whose lives are interwoven with hers gradually reveal the characters of the central protagonists. Clarissa's life is touched by tragedy as the events in her day run parallel to those of Septimus Warren Smith, whose madness escalates as his life draws toward inevitable suicide.'*

Flowers and Feminism, never more regarded as a war between two fruits of the same tree- but, you may ask, what has one got to do with the other? You may mean to mention a few remarks on Margaret Atwood, perhaps a few budding points on Charlotte Brontë, a witticism of Carol Ann Duffy— and, if I dare say, hinted remarks of the vain bouquets of Katherine Mansfield.

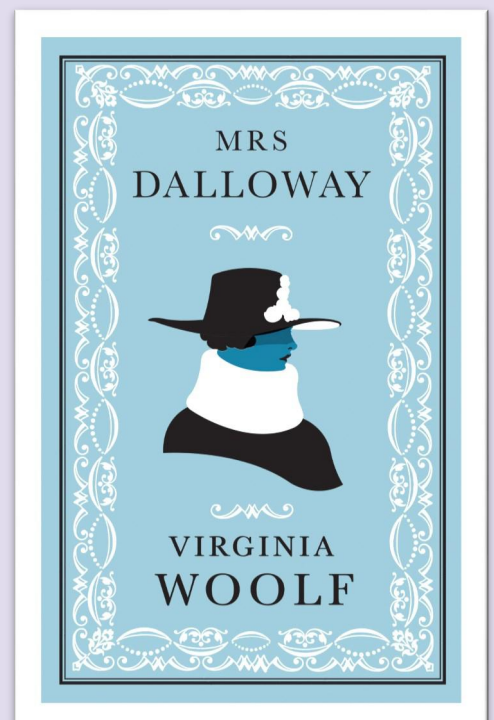
Mrs Dalloway by Virginia Woolf, however one may, as Woolf once said 'lift[t] out on the point of a pen and examined separately' each individual word, is in many ways freckled and enthralled in a multitude of foliage and in a fragranced language, as one may describe- (indeed at this recent offset of Spring) - a certain floral, literal aroma; which, one could say, could never be more pre-imminent than in our days today.

Clarissa's first manifestation in the novel is may be characterized as almost blossoming through flowers: 'Mrs Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself', from the very birth of the novel there is an invested in this assertive and definite decision, and some may argue rooting her character in elaborate and beautifully artificial personality.

However, as one continues through the novel, it may seem that this assertive decisiveness of Clarissa sprouts itself as a prominent cause of her doubt and death-lead stream of consciousness; as her husband, Richard Dalloway, recognises her comfort and understands the assurance she finds in flowers, as she gives her a bouquet of roses; he does not offer her instead an 'I love you'. This floral symbolism is carried through the novel and weaves to the embrace of Clarissa and Sally Seton (a girlhood acquaintance of Clarissa):

'Then came the most exquisite moment of her whole life passing a stone urn with flowers in it. Sally stopped; picked a flower; kissed her on the lips. The whole world might have turned upside down! The others disappeared; there she was alone with Sally.'

These deep feelings and their attributions to nature may illustrate the passion that Clarissa had - (some may argue that she still has) for Sally, especially when compared to Richard's now poignant bouquet; the repetition of the motif staining the uniqueness of his attempt at a romantic gesture.



Save our
Environment!

Please make sure
you recycle this.

Zeynep Sahin

Many of us girls feel the constant need to remove the hair that naturally grows on our body. Whether it's facial, leg, arm and/or any other body hair instantly means that you'll be more beautiful. However this should not be a reason to cover up our bodies- and nor should we feel insecure when wearing a t-shirt on a hot day, or find wearing ripped jeans a chore apparently meaning that you need to shave. We aren't models on razor adverts; who already have those 'silky smooth legs' before they demonstrate the razor anyway.

Why should we girls feel the need to shave our legs when men don't?

Why do they have the privilege to wear shorts with hairy legs?

Why is this 'hairless' beauty standard enforced as being 'feminine'?

Till this date I don't know the answer to these questions. Personally I've been struggling with body hair for some time, especially because I'm one of those people who grow a lot of hair - EVERYWHERE. I spent my entire life envying boys and hating the fact that I was born a girl- all I wanted was to be a guy so I didn't have to deal with the stereotypical 'hassle' of body hair, and so I can walk out in a pair of shorts with hairy legs and not be ashamed to. Instead we are intensely judged for being who we are.

But over time, as my body hair got out of control, so did I.

I didn't want to fit this image that society had created. We have a lot of people preaching be yourself and express yourself but how am I meant to do that if I'm removing a part of myself to fit a 'beauty standard'?

It was definitely not easy embracing hair growth, but over time I just came to terms with a few facts; looks are not everything

"If hair was not supposed to be on your body, why would it be growing in the first place?"

Why we should embrace our body hair



Gabriella Bandeira

and some people are genetically hairier than others. If the fact that I have a hairy body, and that we as females grow hair on our bodies anyway, doesn't affect my standard routines and accomplishments— is it all really worth it?

And ridiculously enough, we live in a world where women can get death threats for having armpit hair.

I'll say this again, it is not easy changing your mind-set and accepting your body hair, because even I haven't completely changed- I still feel ashamed to reveal my legs in public, and I will continue removing body hair time to time when I **want** to. However ultimately I will bow down to all the brave women that have the guts to do that.

Shave or don't shave - it's your choice. Do whatever you're comfortable with. However I think every woman should grow their leg hair at least once, just to feel

empowered - (me and my brother compete as to who can grow the most). If shaving is a chore don't make it compulsory for yourself. You have complete control over your body- it's yours and you can do what you want with it.

Hair doesn't make us any less beautiful. Society shouldn't have to tell you how to use it, what to do with it or how to take care of it.

After all, where's the equality in that?

Moving Out: A Uni Experience

It was evening when I finally mustered the courage to ask my mum the one question that had been on my mind forever. She was bustling around, in the kitchen which was filled with the thick heat and smell of curry. I gingerly stepped inside and rummaged around the cupboards, pretending to look for a snack. "What are you looking for?!" Mum asked all of a sudden, annoyed that I was disturbing her routine. I shuffled around awkwardly feeling the cold of the marble floor seep through my body until my jaws were frozen in place. I forced out, "Well... I need to ask you a question about.. university actually-" She flashed me a quick stern glare mid sentence that caught me off guard. I looked at her guiltily and as the heat enveloped us, the only thing I could say was "I really want to live on campus!" This was the beginning of a war in my home, that would test the already strained relationship between myself and my family.

Like so many girls, my need to want to live on campus was rooted in my desire to finally have the freedom to truly discover my own identity. Having come from a highly religious and protective family, I was forced to undertake a religious identity, one that did not correspond with my own beliefs and opinions. My families orthodox values often prevented me from flourishing as I was unable to take full advantage of the opportunities available for young people my own age. These opportunities included NCS, Duke of Edinburgh, summer school at Oxford University and of course my desire to live on campus. My family were adamant that commuting was the best (only) option for me. My ambitions to get out of my comfort zone, meet new people, and to try

out new things were constantly denied at home. I felt isolated, trapped and I was desperate to leave. And as the saying goes, *desperate times call for desperate measures.*

**“This was the
beginning of a war
in my home”**

The first step was ensuring that I was fully prepared to face the struggles of moving out. Receiving any kind of information, help or support from my family was out of the question and thus I had to resort to alternative sources of information including teachers and online platforms such as The Student Room. I sought help from people who I believed to be instrumental in encouraging me to follow my passions. I often spoke to the head of sixth form, Miss Hope, at the time, who reassured me that moving out could possibly be the best decision I ever made. I was encouraged by the stories of growth and independence that surrounded living on campus.

This wasn't something that I was taught in class or in an assembly or from my parents but from a teacher with experience. I was advised to save up money; to learn how to cook so I wouldn't have to survive on packet noodles all year. An interesting tip was to apply to universities outside of London so when the time came, I would have no choice but to move out.

Most importantly, I needed to be financially prepared to move out. Luckily I had been working since I was 16, first as a nursery assistant and then as a tutor and I slowly stored my earnings into a savings account. It may be a surprise to some that having savings could be useful when you can just live off student loans but an extra store of cash can come in handy as I found before I started university. I was required to pay a deposit for campus accommodation before I had received my maintenance loans and I was lucky enough to have enough in my savings to pay the deposit and have leftover money too. You never know when you're going to need that money!



The truth is, nothing did go to plan. Firstly I went through clearing and got into Queen Mary University of London. This was the first hole in my plan because Queen Mary's was so close to home that there was no way I would get on campus accommodation. In my despair however, I still applied and was put on a waiting list. Unfortunately the email that confirmed I had gotten a place on campus was in my junk mail which I didn't check due to negligence. I initially thought that all my plans for the year were destroyed. However I sent an email to them informing them what had happened and luckily they still had a space for me. All was not lost. I informed my family who were dismayed and

refused to help me. So I packed my belongings into suitcases and cardboard boxes and transported my luggage in quite an unconventional way. Uber. Yes, I used Uber to transport all my things on campus. As I was leaving in the night, I knew I was about to begin a new chapter in my life.

Moving on campus was just like all the stories I had been told but so different. This time, it was my story. The uber pulled up outside my building on campus, and I got out. I immediately felt as if the air was different around the university. It wasn't quite the same as it was during the

day time. There was a curious buzz in the air, a low chatter, a kind of apprehension and excitement evident in the faces of all the other students lounging around. We were all in the same boat. Some of the friends I had already made had come out to help me lug my suitcases into my room. I spent the next few weeks adjusting into my new life, unpacking all my belongings; decorating; putting up LED lights; and most importantly learning how to be self reliant.

People always ask me if I regret moving out and the answer to that will always be

no. I've met people from so many different walks of life that I can no longer see the world in black and white but I can also the grey in-between. The flexibility and spontaneity of campus living is something that commuting will never be able to offer. Being able to visit my friends at 2am in the night, spontaneous flat parties, hitting up the library at 12am until 5am in the morning etc.

Sometimes, in the early morning hours, I'll sit on the roof of my flat and look on at the view of central London as the sky lightens and wonder, is this really my life? This time last year, I dreamt of living the life I do now. I can only thank myself for taking the risk, because if I hadn't I'd still be trapped in a lifestyle that I had never asked for. Sometimes it's worth risking everything.

“Sometimes it's worth risking everything”

So many of us girls who want to move out when we go to university are in the same boat because it's normal not to have a clue what to expect during university. I've taken the time to answer some of the questions that you guys have about university.

How is it different from Sixth Form?

Sixth form is simply a stage in your life that prepares you for the university lifestyle. You'll find that at university the level of independence and freedom you have is both frightening and exciting as it's so easy to take advantage of. During sixth form, your teachers will often be a source of discipline as they may take an individualistic interest in your aspirations and push you to complete your work. In university, you come to realise that the only person pushing you to complete your work, is you. Your teachers will be unlikely to know your name unless you make the effort to introduce yourself and get to know them. On top of academic workload, you have to make sure you that you are taking caring of yourself; doing the dishes; buying groceries; cooking etc. University is a time when you realise that you are now the only person that can control everything in your life. It's easy to forego your

responsibilities but my top tip is keeping your future goals in sight as it will motivate you to not only complete your assignments but to also wash the dishes that are piling up in your sink.

Is it hard managing on your own?

Managing on your own is only as hard as you make it for yourself. It will be difficult at first to adjust to the various responsibilities that you have on your plate but it's all about figuring out the routine that works best for you. As daunting as it seems to have so much free time, it's also such an exciting prospect to figure out how you work and who you really are. It's all about figuring out the little things that make you work like an early morning walk, or a steaming cup of coffee.

Most important lesson learnt

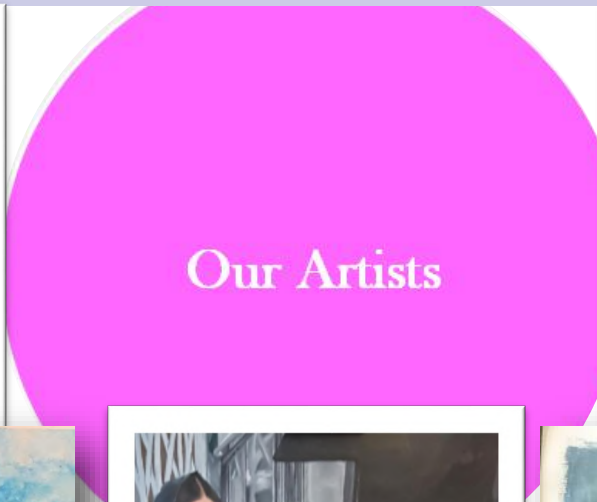
The most important lesson I've learnt during university is that nobody cares about you more than yourself. It may sound cynical or grim but it's the most empowering lesson I've learnt. It's so easy to become

dependent on friends but at the end of the day when you're having a breakdown at 3am in the night, the only person that can help you stand right back up and power through a shitty day is you. It is empowering to know that despite what difficulties you go through, you have the strength to switch your mind-set and motivate yourself to keep going.

To those of you who feel as if your dreams are so far from your grasp, just remember that sometimes you have to take a risk and step out of your comfort zone to get where you want to be.

Sawdah Bhaimiya





Gabriela Bandeira



Anisa Begum



Anon



Aisha Vesamia



Anisa Begum

YOU FIGHT LIKE A GIRL!

Zaynab Patel

Over the years the silver screen has graced us with men as dominating figures casting a shadow on women. One of the biggest fandoms in the world falls into that category; the superhero universe. The first words associated with superheroes are strong, brave, heroic and images of men with a muscular physique. You would be surprised to know that some of the most powerful superheroes in this fictional universe are in fact, women. But why are these women not the first associations that come to mind when talking about superheroes, are we only damsels in distress that need to be saved? For many years' cinema has portrayed women based on the gender stereotypes created by society. When an actress comes on screen in most cases she is in the form of a skinny, weak and overemotional character which some of us can relate to but for the most of us, we can't. Having a strong, powerful female character dominating the silver screen is seen as

a deviation, something that most people are really not ready for. With many female superhero solo movies coming out, these movies have the power to change how women are portrayed on the big screen. Superheroes are about these amazing, strong individuals using their powers and talents to do good in the world and inspiring others to do the same and it shouldn't matter whether they are male or female.

**I was told I shouldn't
read comics because I'm
a girl**

Growing up, I was once told by a family member that I shouldn't be reading comics and liking superheroes because I am a girl. I was furious, to say the least, because I was being told what I should like, and dislike based on my gender. Yet reading these comics and looking up to these female heroes have helped shape me into the person I am today as well as many other young women.

Female superheroes teach girls valuable lessons.

A lesser known hero, Jessica Jones is one of the most relatable characters to be brought to life on the big screen with her show on Netflix. She is powerful, strong, unemotional and weak all at the same time. A female character who I was able to relate to and be inspired by. Her character shows as a human everyone has layers and doesn't matter if you are a hero or not.

Female superheroes empower women to break free from the constraints of gender stereotypes and remind us that we can be leaders and that we can be powerful. Having them on the silver screen allows young girls to envision all the possibilities they have in the future and show them that they can be anything they want to be. The influence of female superheroes has the power to change the way young girls look at themselves and change the way the future generation of women are seen.

Femininity in Werewolf Books

M.Adia

I have a bone to pick.

As an avid reader, I have trawled through literature both online and offline, searching for books that ignite that the need to read more - the need to stay awake at night – that comes with discovering a page turner. A genre which I often found myself drawn to is of the Werewolf type. (Ensnare eye-rolls of the 'highbrow' literature readers).

But I have a problem.

I find that, often, books of the genre lend themselves to recycled plot lines - stories of alphas, rejection, possessive males, bad boys and such. I am tired of these clichés, these so thinly disguised abusive relationships that are prevalent in the genre. And of course the 'blonde b****' that threatens the relationship of the

protagonist and the 'MCM'. (Wattpad, I'm looking at you).

Here lies my main issue - the vilifying of another possible love interest. This is where I branch away from the genre, because I'm sick of reading about the 'other woman', the sultry, and often scantily-dressed, beautiful woman who would be desired but never respected enough to be 'wifey'

I'm sick of reading about the 'other woman'

material. And this entire perception stems from the 'Madonna-whore' dichotomy, a 'complex' identified by Freud (don't we love him and all his misogynistic explanations of behaviour? My personal favourite is the one where women are 'failed attempts at masculinity'. (*Delightful*). The continual demonization of female promiscuity, slut-shaming in all its forms, rape culture in all

its horrific minimising, are all prevalent today, and are all a product of the Madonna-whore Complex. This rather common pattern of thought divides women's humanity into two distinct categories that are supposedly mutually exclusive and it's reflected in literature so heavily. The saddest part is that female writers themselves are subject to this misguided view of compartmentalising, so shaped and indoctrinated by these ongoing conventions that they fall prey to them, without even realising.

So how does this all link to the femininity in Werewolf literature?

Well, it was a book of that specific genre that sparked this realisation of the two polar opposites of females that exist in literature – the shy, feminine and submissive protagonist VS the direct and sexually active opponent who is degraded. There *has* to be a way forward from this, a way to shed this Complex.

Why I Hate Twilight

Anon

I have a serious love-hate relationship with Twilight. On one hand, it is one of my favourite, not-so-guilty pleasures that I pretty much always find myself returning to. But on the other, it is so incredibly demeaning to women and, as someone who discovered it myself at a young age, can be very damaging to young girls. The whole plot of New Moon is quite literally a sugar-coated message saying that, simply, girls and women can't function without having a man in their life. What the hell?! Bella shuts down metaphorically, emotionally and physically for *months* all because (SPOILER ALERT)

Edward leaves her. And what makes it worse is that she doesn't even 'recover' until, lo and behold, another male enters her life. (Cue the endless sighs) Her depression is very much romanticised and, even though it's supposed to show her undying love for him, it's stupidly dramatic and overboard to a point where you'd really simply just want to punch her. (For the



record, I have always sympathised with people post-break up, however Twilight was just a bit *too* exaggerated).

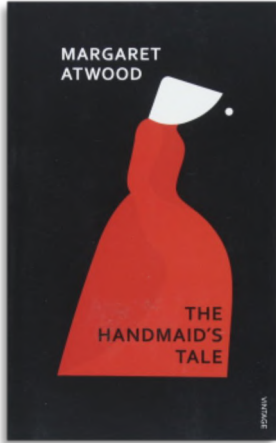
Another thing that annoys me to no ends is the fact that Stephenie Meyer just seems to hate single people. *There is not one single woman in the whole Saga*. Everyone has someone predestined for

them in the saga, so much so that as soon as you start reading you could easily bet who gets with who. Meyer goes as far as to make a man fall in love with a **new-born** before she even had time to open her eyes (don't even get me started on that disgusting plot line that is borderline paedophilic). Her attempts at covering up the fact that she hates singles comes in the form of Charlie. But, in the end, even he is infected by the storm of Stephenie Meyer.

It's come to a point where many fans have just decided to completely ignore the incredible flaws and contradictions in both books and films. And I can't blame them because *there are just so many*.

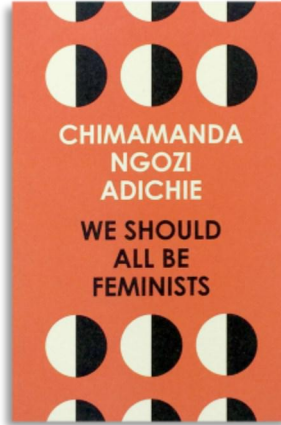
Books: In one sentence*- International Women's Month edition

*(maybe more)



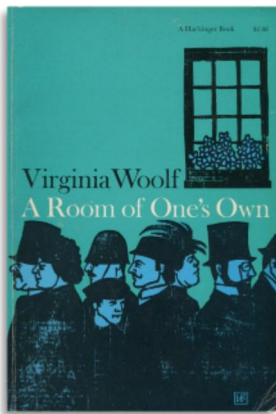
A Handmaid's Tale Margaret Atwood

A utopian novel, where everything, no matter how extreme, has happened at some point in female history; eye opening.



We Should All Be Feminists Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

What does feminism mean today? In a world where both women and men are happy, Adichie discusses how children's upbringings should change while tackling the difficult theme of why we should all be feminists.



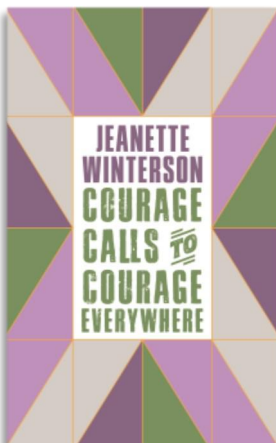
A Room if One's Own Virginia Woolf

Something to aspire to, bold, yet delicate; a daring essay in Woolf's time; you can't miss this one!



Becoming Michelle Obama

Empowering women beyond the page, a bestseller not because of popularity, but because of truth- for those who are in need of guidance, or who simply want a good story to pass on.



Courage Calls to Courage Everywhere Jeanette Winterson

Witty, bold, and deeply affectionate- the skilfully simplified, untold history of women.



Milk & Honey Rupi Kaur

A stunner, Kaur weaves through her experiences as a women of colour, telling her journey through words and self made illustrations.

Psst- most of these books should be in the LRC, if not, just ask!