

# FEMINISM, WOMANHOOD & POWER

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Graphic Design, Research in Practice (ADAD5004)

Word count: 2,308

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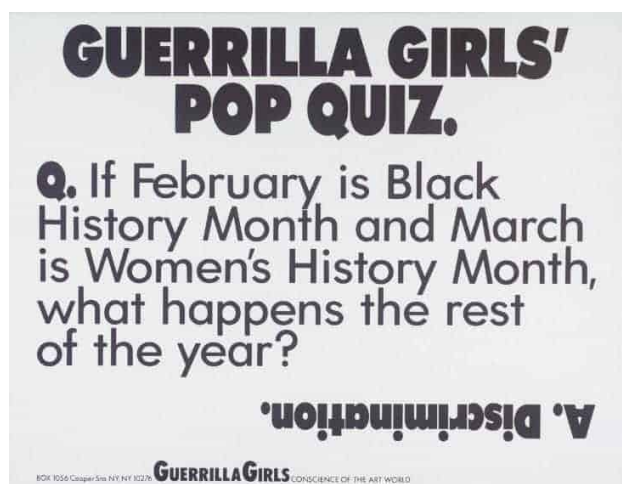
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Being a woman has always had its struggles throughout history, but in today's day and age there are so many more conversations going on about women's rights and equality among the sexes. Each and every culture and person has their own views of how inequality should be dealt with "correctly". By deciding upon Feminism, Womanhood and Power as my three keywords, I am planning to not only open further conversations with peers, colleagues and family members, but become more educated on the matters myself. Five interviews were carried out, with all questions based around these three keywords. This allowed me to gain five further opinions and stories to add to the discussion.

As stated by Cambridge Dictionary, Feminism is "the belief that women should be allowed the same rights, power, and opportunities as men and be treated in the same way"(1), "It is the belief in social, economic and political equality of the sexes"(2). Feminism mainly originates in western society, however, it is a worldwide manifestation, with many institutions representing feminism and their commitment to women's rights. There have been hundreds of attempts throughout history trying to bridge the gap between both women's and men's rights. Today, this is more relevant than ever as we are getting further and further away from the starting line, yet we are making no progress. A group that has been particularly relevant throughout the fight for women's rights are the anonymous 'Guerilla Girls'. They formed as a collective of female, feminist artists dedicated to the fight against racism and sexism, specifically in the world of art in 1985 New York. Their main mission still to this day is bringing focus to gender and racial inequality. My personal interpretation as to why they stay anonymous is because the issues they are fighting for are so easily set in a bad eye by the media and non-

supporters that these issues need all the focus, rather than the focusing of people behind the movement. As shown in the 'Guerrilla Girls Pop Quiz' image, they tackle the worldwide problem of systemic discrimination by "revealing the understory, the subtext, the overlooked, and the downright unfair."(4) They are unapologetic and revealing without showing, doing or saying anything to do with themselves. Each member adopts a name from passed away and

unremembered female artists in order to not only work on the current and future problems, but also the forgotten past. As mentioned previously, the word



Guerrilla Girls, You're seeing less than half the picture... (1989) (1)

“Feminism” has more negative than positive press surrounding it. As Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie wrote, “...It shows is how that word feminist is so heavy with baggage, negative baggage: you hate men, you hate bras, you hate African culture, you think women should always be in charge, you don’t wear make-up, you don’t shave, you’re always angry, you don’t have a sense of humour, you don’t use deodorant.”(6) After reading her book called ‘We Should All Be Feminists’, I decided to carry out a series of interviews, where I based most of my questions from her book and asked a diverse group of people to answer them. Interviewee A, has had a unique upbringing, living in four different countries throughout her childhood and two more once she had left school, she undoubtedly has had the opportunity to live with many different people, immersed in their cultures. Due to this broad open minded knowledge, one of the questions I asked her was: ‘Do you believe feminists have a bad reputation and why/why not?’. Her initial response suggested that men were the reason and only ones that viewed feminists in a bad light, she then went on to say, “One of the biggest misconceptions is that feminism in a movement for women by women, in oppression of all men. However it is there to benefit everyone. Hollywood and social media has been very influential in perpetuating this stereotype.” (Interview A) Yes, this is one opinion out of billions, but it has been the same miseducation that has been spread for years and years, that has caused us to halt our progression and grow as a species. When asked ‘What does feminism mean to you?’, Interviewee A responded “Standing with all women, strong and weak, mature or young and however she looks, dresses or identifies, never demeaning her because of her gender. A feminist does not hate men, they LOVE women and everything they stand for.” (Interview A)



Guerrilla Girls, Guerrilla Girls' Pop Quiz, (1990) (2)

Womanhood is my second keyword which influences my final question. Rather than explaining the dictionary definition of womanhood, I asked the question, ‘What does womanhood mean to you?’ when I carried out a series of interviews based around my three keywords. There were five interviews and five completely different answers. The answer that I felt was most relevant was spoken by Interviewee C, “Womanhood to me, is the link between all women that is invisible and invincible.” (Interview C) This answer highlighted the fact that being a woman isn’t just your ‘female’ gender, it is the way by which you are instructed and

expected to live your life based around societies rules and pressures. Author, editor and lexicographer, Erin Mckean once said, “You don’t owe prettiness to anyone. Not your boyfriend/spouse/partner, not to your co-workers, especially not to random men on the street. You don’t owe it to your mother, you don’t owe it to your children, you don’t owe it to civilisation in general. Prettiness is not a rent you pay for occupying a space marked ‘female’.” (7) In todays society as a woman, anything you do or say, or the way you dress or what you eat is turned into a negative or a flaw. We are encouraged to be confident and express our opinions, but as soon as you do so you are considered ‘cocky’, ‘bossy’ or a ‘loud mouth’. If you do not fit the role of ‘skinny’ and you eat in public, you are considered fat, gross and “she does it to herself”. We are told “Wear what makes you happy!” Yet called unprofessional, slutty or an attention seeker when we do so. One of my all time favourite authors and artists, Florence Given wrote, “I realised how much of my self worth was determined by whether or not I appeared desirable to men, and whether that prettiness would be enough to encourage them to treat me with respect.” (8) Respect should be earned depending on who you are as a person, not by the way you dress or look. Respect is to admire someone for their achievements, abilities and qualities, not just because they are a male or have male qualities. When interviewees were asked ‘Who or what is a symbol for power, womanhood and feminism for you, and why?’, nearly everyone said their mother. One of the male interviewees (B) wrote, “I would have to give that one to my mother, being raised by such a

**AS A WOMAN  
IN THIS WORLD, IT  
OFTEN FEELS AS THOUGH  
WE HAVE TWO CHOICES:  
WE CAN EITHER BE  
DESIRED, OR RESPECTED.  
SEEN, OR HEARD.  
WE RARELY EVER GET  
TO EXPERIENCE BOTH  
AT THE SAME TIME.  
WHICH ONE WE EXPERIENCE  
OF COURSE, DEPENDS  
ENTIRELY ON OUR  
APPEARANCE.**

Women Don't Owe You Pretty, pg 38

**PRIVILEGE  
IS USUALLY INVISIBLE  
TO THE PERSON  
WHO HAS IT  
UNTIL IT'S POINTED  
OUT TO THEM,  
OR AFTER THEY HAVE  
LOST THAT  
PRIVILEGE.**

Women Don't Owe You Pretty, pg 206

reasoned and considerate person in tough circumstances is hugely symbolic for me. She completed university when we were still young kids, climbed the ladder in her workplace all the way to the highest position whilst raising us on her own. She instilled reasoned views on how we should treat everybody in this world, there’s an awful lot I’m grateful to her for in shaping my views on equality.” (Interview B) Their mothers were described as the epitome of womanhood and resilience. Everyday women are pressured by the idea of womanhood. We are confronted with it every time we have a period, look in the mirror, lose weight, put on weight, get a haircut, dress up or wear heels. We are pressured to have kids, a

family and be married by a certain age, get an easy job or be a stay at home mum, work hard but not too hard that men feel threatened and do what you're told. I once again went back and asked the question to both male and female Interviewees, 'Have you ever felt pressured by the idea of woman hood?' Interviewee B (male) responded "No I don't think so, but I think as a male that question might read more appropriately as 'intimidated' rather than 'pressured', I think many men are intimidated by the idea that what we might define as 'traditional' womanhood is changing. I certainly have felt pressure to conform to the predetermined ideals of 'manhood' when I was younger, and can absolutely relate to the strains on anybody that thinks they need to fulfil certain criteria to be considered a 'true' gender." (Interview B) Although womanhood is embedded in our civilisation, the true definition is changing. Womanhood is no longer, "the state of being a woman" (9) it is being a woman everyday and living, moulding and shaping into the person you are meant to be. Loving and being loved and accepting it without feeling weaker for it. "The negative in womanhood, is that no matter your age or physical attributes, style or race, being a woman means you will always be prey if you are not cautious." (Interview A)

Force. Strength. Power, legal or official authority, capacity or right. "The late Kenyan Nobel peace laureate Wangari Maathai put it simply and well when she said, 'The higher you go, the fewer women there are.'" (6) For centuries now men have been the 'definition' of power, women were a side 'piece', there to support them and look after them. It has been years of climbing the ranks in order to get women in higher up places in industries, let alone political positions. When asked 'What does a woman in power look like to you?' Interviewee C said, "The main vision that comes to mind is of a woman who fights, who strives for what she wants and believes in. Someone who regardless of being told „you can't, you shouldn't and you won't“ will make it her every ambition to prove those same people wrong and give herself what she deserves. A woman in power is scared, she cries in her room when no one is around, she dances and sings at the top of her lungs whilst driving, she feels everything and talks to herself just as much as she would to someone else. Above all, she is anyone, she focuses on herself but loves those who she deems to deserve it." (Interview C) A powerful woman should have no expectations and limits. Toronto based photographic artist Adeyemi Adegbesan, also known as Yung Yemi, creates the feeling of power through his art. He uses woman entwined with flowers, gold and nature's most fierce animals to display the strength, beauty and force that is a woman. Although not all of them are specific to the embodiment of power amongst women, they are all powerful in their own way. Our male interviewee replied to the same question as previously



mentioned, his reply was more directed towards the business side of things, “In the ‘business’ world, we seem to have constructed an idea that women in power are a specific types of women that don’t conform to our normal ‘ideals’ of womanhood – basically that a woman in power is ‘more like a man’, which I refuse to accept as our definition of women in power. Women in power in the entertainment world are usually commercialised to the point where they are made to be ultra-feminine in their representation, which is also damaging in my opinion, as its reenforcing the idea that power is only earned through ‘sellable’ talent and beauty, it isn’t realistic for every woman and sets many young women up to believe they cannot achieve their goals because they don’t look or act a certain way. To me, a woman in power is anyone that identifies as a woman. Power is not an earned status, we should start assuming everybody has power.” (Interview B) A woman in power is considered a threat to men in power, and men have been in power so long that the shift in these positions has disrupted not only men, but women alike. Some companies are hiring women for high status roles just to promote the notion that they believe in equality, without actually giving these women the tools to succeed. Author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie once said, “Why should a woman’s success be a threat to a man?...We spend too much time teaching girls to worry about what boys think of them...We spend too much time telling girls that they cannot be angry or aggressive or tough.” (6) When in fact, these are the exact qualities that most men in a place of power portray and thrive on.

Throughout history, being a woman or identifying as a woman has always had its struggles and downfalls. With more and more conversations being started about equality throughout genders and sexes, the words Feminism, Womanhood and Power are being brought up a lot. The sheer amount of contrasting opinions out there is becoming completely overwhelming, it is influencing a large amount of stereotypes, good and bad, around the topic. But, why is Feminism not the norm

in everyone's day to day life? And why has the word Feminist been chosen as a way of describing the extreme sides of female to male equality? By deciding upon Feminism, Womanhood and Power as my three keywords, I am planning to not only open further conversations with peers, colleagues and family, but become more educated on the matter myself. Interviews were carried out, with all questions based around these three keywords, which allowed me to gain further opinions and stories to add to the discussion and conversation. After reviewing all interviews, artists and resources, I am still left with one basic question: How does Feminism, Womanhood and Power affect and tie into the lives of both males and females today, and is equality amongst the sexes inevitable?

## PROPOSED QUESTION FOR INDEPENDANT PROJECT

How does Feminism, Womanhood and Power affect and tie into the lives of both males and females today, and is equality amongst the sexes inevitable?

### Sub Questions

Why the word Feminist?

Why is feminism not the norm?

Why are women taught to shrink ourselves down to make others feel better about themselves?

Is Feminism FOR everybody?

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## INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

### Interview A:

[I worked with a good friend from Bookclub to answer these questions so have left some of her Answers too.]

#### What does feminism mean to you?

Standing with all women, strong and weak, mature or young and however she looks, dresses or identifies, never demeaning her because of her gender.

A feminist does not hate men, they love women and everything they stand for.

#### What does womanhood mean to you?

For me being a mother EVERY day, living, loving, moulding and shaping. Being loved and accepting it without feeling weaker for it.

My privilege and my curse was being born a woman:

Womanhood meant periods from hell. The journey of fertility and failure. The journey of fertility and success

The journey of birth – Giving me the strength to sit in the NICU ward for 28 days at the incubators waiting to see if my Triplets could make it!

To the comraderee I felt sitting in that Hospital ward amongst women (Mums, Nurses, Grandmothers) who had the strength to be there every day watching their children fight for their lives. Holding each other in silent sobs as a child in the next incubator did not make it. Womanhood gives us a right to just be there for one another, no questions asked.

The negative is Womanhood, no matter your age or physical attributes, means you will always be prey if you are not cautious.

#### Would you describe yourself as a feminist?

Yes.

#### What would you consider a feminist's ideologies and do you consider them to be parallel to yours?

I am no activist. I am very lucky to live in a particular time, place and demographic that means I do not live in fear of my husband, never abusing me physically and I believe I have a family that respects what I personally represent.

However, I resent having to think twice about how I dress or present myself to the world at large in order to avoid putting myself in danger or in the way of unsolicited comments in public.

I resent having to look left and right at a traffic light / robots for fear of being hijacked

I resent living in the most beautiful country behind burglar bars and bars on my gates / doors locked when I am at home, because I fear the male violence.

I fear for my daughter who I have taught the drop, kick, roll and stranger danger song to since she was 3 years old. I have taught her the correct medical terms for her private parts since she was 7yrs just in case she is raped!

I hate thinking about my personal safety when parking or walking in a shopping centre. I hate the violence that my country believes is normal.

What I hate is that women blame themselves - When women are angry, they tear themselves down, or do so to other people's reputations. This is prevalent in the workplace, families and social circles and is not as visible but often more destructive.

#### Do you believe feminists have a bad reputation and why/why not?

Yes. Many men still think feminists are butch, badly dressed lesbians. One of the biggest misconceptions is that feminism is a movement for women by women in opposition of all men. However it is there to benefit everyone.

Hollywood and the media (especially younger women's magazines / TIK Tok!) has been very influential in perpetuating this stereotype.

**Does your view on feminism follow that of the media's generally negative portrayal?**

No, I believe that there is VERY little media out there that does not sell sponsored content in the guise of editorial information and therefore disregard most commercial media, primarily because they are driving an agenda based on GIMME. (Gimme free stuff and I'll write/blog/like/troll about it..)

**Do you believe we are close to equality between men and women (excluding other gender identifications for this question as equality is sadly much further off)?**

No.

As long as entitled folk of either gender believe their narrow choices and opinions need airing on social media, as long as women are silent about misogyny within their own realm of influence, as long as mothers bow and scrape, serve and apologise for the behaviour of their male progeny.

As long as women are judged because of how they look or behave in public and are held to different standards to men, the answer is a solid no.

As long as women try to dismantle other women both in public and private.

As long as women believe they need a man to validate their own worth, as long as women's magazines are allowed to publish the simpering drivel they do, dressed in stupid fashion and ridiculous heels, there will be no equality.

As long as men believe that a woman's body is currency that can be traded for trinkets, sex and obedience.

As long as men use the old-boy network to reward less qualified men, or believe that women are incapable of being both fertile and professional, nothing will change.

**What does a woman in power look like to you? (Not necessarily a boss or politician)**

Mostly wary, exhausted, because she had to work hard for her position, and she has to defend it EVERY day.

**Who or what is a symbol for power, womanhood and feminism for you and why?**

Maggie Thatcher: she stared down every man in her life except her husband, she was not always right, but she was fearless. She is a female icon.

Jacinda Ardern The Prime Minister of New Zealand: she's had a baby in office, breast fed in Parliament, largely protected her country through the Covid Pandemic, and not once mentioned the name of the Christchurch bomber who killed 51 people in 2017, denying him a voice and the fame he craved. Only the victims were named, honoured and remembered publicly. The press largely, and incredibly, respected this. She has the trust of her people, and the admiration of world leaders who take her seriously because of what she does, not what she is.

Rosemary Bryant Mariner Tactile fighter jet pilot - US Navy - the first women to earn wings as United States Naval Aviators. She went on to become the first US female aviator in history to fly a fighter jet. And braving obstacles at every stage, she also became the first woman to command an operational squadron. Throughout her life, she was a passionate advocate of equal rights for women and for their integration in combat aviation. In 1982 she became a surface warfare officer on the USS Lexington – she also became the first female aviator assigned to an aircraft carrier. She also was selected in 1991 to participate in Operation Desert Storm.

**Did you have a female figure in your life growing up that embodied power, womanhood and feminism for you? How?**

Yes - My Mother

She epitomises Womanhood, power and resilience - Dropped off at strict Catholic boarding school at the age of 6 / 7yrs – seeing her parents 2 times a year – flying in small planes to visit them unattended.

Moving countries from Zambia, Zimbabwe, UK, SA, UK due to her husband choosing to move / work. Suffering miscarriages. Having the strength to choose being a stay at home Mum, so that her children would have a better childhood than her own. Giving up luxuries so that we would not go without.

Being one of our biggest cheerleaders.

Teaching 2 daughters to be self sufficient, that love and discipline go hand in hand - ensuring that her daughters stood up for themselves. Giving them the opportunity to spread their wings and fly but still keeping themselves grounded.

Ivonne's female figure:

My Grandmother.

She was a nurse in WW11 in Italy, smoked with the style of a movie star and had a manicure every Thursday whatever the weather, politics or finances of the day were. She managed my adorable grandfather with fortitude, helped her granddaughters safely navigate both puberty and a very angry mother, and she once told my father to Fuck Off.

It was the only time I EVER heard her swear, and was the bravest thing I ever saw.

She was beautiful, wore her age with incredible grace, and was fearless. I miss her still.

**Do you think you are powerful, and why?**

A difficult question. I am a woman who grew up believing my opinion mattered but I never felt strong enough to believe in myself. My Father was nothing short of a gentleman who lead by example – my Mother was a force to be reckoned with and held the family together.

My upbringing has made me the person I am today - my children have made me believe I am enough and I am loved. I have given up my full time job to raise Triplets and have done this most of the time single handedly – so YES at last I think that I am enough and powerful.

**Has feminism changed the way you view womanhood?**

Definitely. I simply don't accept jokes that make women small, stupid or weak. I call out men who make disparaging comments about women's bodies or looks. I won't allow those around me to be talked down to. I have sat in silence for so long and find the older I have got – my voice has got louder.

**Have you done anything you believe to change the views of others (for better or worse) on womanhood?**

Yes, I believe I have carved the children I have taught in Taiwan, USA and South Africa to be better people. To be respectful equality and of women, to understand humility, empathy and love.

I have taught my boys to make their beds and pack a dishwasher / washing machine and not take women for granted. One man at a time. We'll get there.

**Have you ever felt pressured by the idea of womanhood?**

Every day.

Women are confronted with it every time they look in the mirror, every time they have a period, every time they pick up weight, lose weight, wear heels, cut their hair, start to have the beginnings of a hot flushes...

Being a woman is a full time job!

I don't believe men ever think of their gender.

## Interview B:

**What does feminism mean to you?**

Any action or behaviour that seeks to inspire equality among the sexes, nurturing the values of gender without continuing to disproportionately benefit men in society.

**What does womanhood mean to you?**

To me, the idea of womanhood is anyone that accepts and embraces the more traditional defining factors of being a woman, something potentially outdated in modern society, much like the idea of 'manhood', which I personally believe has been quite damaging to young people throughout history, encouraging them to fulfil predetermined 'roles' in a society that doesn't align with actual equality.

### Would you describe yourself as a feminist?

I think, given my gender and the undoubted privileges that come with being a male, it would be naïve of me to assume I could understand and speak on behalf of women, I have not encountered many of the negative experiences women endure and will likely never personally experience.

I certainly do believe in, and actively support the goal that one day women are represented equally in all aspects of society.

### What would you consider a feminist's ideologies and do you consider them to be parallel to yours?

This is complex to me, because I am aware there are many ideologies that stem from the different ways in which feminists are grouped, and I have not done enough research to form an overarching opinion. I would say radical/anarchistic feminism is something I don't align with, but I don't tend to align with any form of radical movement as I think it often creates too much division.

I most certainly do believe that considering the foundations of feminist ideologies (social, economics and politics), I would share the views of 'mainstream feminism', but I am also aware that certain aspects of feminism are being poorly represented in mainstream ideologies, notably with race, sexuality and class, and this is something I do not align with. I think if we are striving for absolute equality, then all elements of equality are of paramount importance.

### Do you believe feminists have a bad reputation and why/why not?

I do believe so yes, I think human nature is to seek the extreme when it comes to entertainment, news and politics, most forms of media tend to either focus on radicalisation, or highlight underrepresentation within a movement itself to cast a shadow over the true foundations of it.

There is also a clear focus on the idea of 'threatening manhood' to create further social division between genders. Men are deciding that striving for equality will sacrifice their current privilege in the modern world, and I think this is being reinforced in even the most basic forms of social media. It really scares me how many people seem to believe that a feminist is some sort of terrorist looking to attack 'how women should look, how they should behave, and how men are so terrible', rather than understanding the actual meaning of equality.

### Does your view on feminism follow that of the media's generally negative portrayal?

No, for me it consistently highlights the need for progression through feminism, let's not forget the type of people that traditionally own and control media outlets.

### Do you believe we are close to equality between men and women (excluding other gender identifications for this question as equality is sadly much further off)?

I don't think we are anywhere near where we should be. There are definite signs of generational change, especially since the internet became such a powerhouse for global exposure, and consistent change seems apparent, but there is still an absolute poison running through modern society that is constantly highlighting inequality, I hope the internet will continue to shock and encourage more and more political and behavioural change, rather than damage it.

### What does a woman in power look like to you? (Not necessarily a boss or politician)

In the 'business' world, we seem to have constructed an idea that women in power are a specific type of women that don't conform to our normal 'ideals' of womanhood – basically that a woman in power is 'more like a man', which I refuse to accept as our definition of women in power.

Women in power in the entertainment world are usually commercialised to the point where they are made to be ultra-feminine in their representation, which is also damaging in my opinion as it's reinforcing the idea that power is only earned through 'sellable' talent and beauty, it isn't realistic for every woman and sets many young women up to believe they cannot achieve their goals because they don't look or act a certain way.

To me, a woman in power is anyone that identifies as a woman. Power is not an earned status, we should start assuming everybody has power.

Who or what is a symbol for power, womanhood and feminism for you and why?

I would have to give that one to my mother, being raised by such a reasoned and considerate person in tough circumstances is hugely symbolic for me. She completed university when we were still young kids, climbed the ladder in her workplace all the way to the highest position whilst raising us on her own. She instilled reasoned views on how we should treat everybody in this world, there's an awful lot I'm grateful to her for in shaping my views on equality.

Did you have a female figure in your life growing up that embodied power, womanhood and feminism for you? How?

I grew up without a reliable father figure in my household, so to me, female figures were always more present as figures of power and womanhood, my family definitely encouraged that belief as I was growing up.

Do you think you are powerful, and why?

I think my idea of power is conflicted and is something that changes as I get older. I used to assume power came with control, then saw the damage caused by men with power and control. I now see power as independence, having control over yourself and your actions is power. I strive for power in that sense, but I do think can be a dangerous word.

Has feminism changed the way you view womanhood?

N/A

Have you done anything you believe to change the views of others (for better or worse) on womanhood?

Perhaps not in a conventional sense of being actively involved in groups, movements etc. But I have always passionately discussed and defended the idea of womanhood to anyone that is clearly threatened by it.

Have you ever felt pressured by the idea of womanhood?

No I don't think so, but I think as a male that question might read more appropriately as 'intimidated' rather than 'pressured', I think many men are intimidated by the idea that what we might define as traditional womanhood is changing.

I certainly have felt pressure to conform to the predetermined ideals of 'manhood' when I was younger, and can absolutely relate to the strains on anybody that thinks they need to fulfil certain criteria to be considered a 'true' gender. But no, I don't think I have ever felt pressured, or intimidated by womanhood.

### Interview C:

What does feminism mean to you?

To me, feminism is all about women standing up for what they believe is right in regard to the many differences between men & women in general. The key words that come to mind are „fighting for equality“

What does womanhood mean to you?

To me, womanhood is being proud to be a woman. Feeling powerful, fierce and grateful to be able to resonate constant beauty in all things both emotional and material. To be a woman is to know your responsibilities and to have the right to make your own choice in accordance with these.

Would you describe yourself as a feminist?

No. I wouldn't categorise myself in any way, just like I wouldn't for my sexuality. I think people always feel the need to label everything, to my mind, i know that I have certain beliefs and ideas for some subjects, such as women should have equal rights to men and there should be no divide whether it be on personal or professional levels.

What would you consider a feminist's ideologies and do you consider them to be parallel to yours?

The first examples that come to mind is; women should be able to not wear tops just like men, although I wish this was possible in terms of equality, women have been sexualised since the beginning of time. I think attacking men isn't the way to go about it but educating both men and women old and new in a sensible, calm and fun way would be amazing.

**Do you believe feminists have a bad reputation and why/why not?**

Although I personally don't have a specific opinion towards feminists I have realised through meeting a variety of people over the years that most feminists have a bad reputation due to the protests and exaggerated demonstrations etc. However, this is one of those things where the odd exception will make for a generality and I don't agree that every person with feminist ideas should be given a bad reputation. Everyone should be listened too, providing the same is done in return.

**Does your view on feminism follow that of the media's generally negative portrayal?**

I don't think so. I like to believe that I am mature enough to make my own decision and make my own mind up on the subject regardless of the media's influence.

**Do you believe we are close to equality between men and women (excluding other gender identifications for this question as equality is sadly much further off)?**

I would love to be able to answer YES ABSOLUTELY! But I would be lying to both you and myself. Although there are sometimes the rare exceptions and breakthrough moments where things change in certain countries I think we are still living in a very male dominated society (in this case western culture, excluding Russia and some other European countries... and even more so in eastern countries).

**What does a woman in power look like to you? (Not necessarily a boss or politician)**

Answer: For me, she can be of any age and from any social demographic. This goes far beyond the „influencers“ on social media. I believe that a woman in power can be just as much a mother of one or more children or a single woman all regardless of age. The main vision that comes to mind is of a woman who fights, who strives for what she wants and believes in. Someone who regardless of being told „you can't, you shouldn't and you won't“ will make it her every ambition to prove those same people wrong and give herself what she deserves. A woman in power is scared, she cries in her room when no one is around, she dances and sings at the top of her lungs whilst driving, she feels everything and talks to herself just as much as she would to someone else. Above all, she is anyone, she focuses on herself but loves those who she deems to deserve it. A woman in power is me, is the girl next door, is whoever you think of and are inspired by. She is everywhere and she just lives her life. That is the powerful part.

**Who or what is a symbol for power, womanhood and feminism for you and why?**

I don't have one in mind

**Did you have a female figure in your life growing up that embodied power, womanhood and feminism for you? How?**

I wouldn't say that I have throughout my life. However, in the last 2 years or so there are a couple of women that I follow on Instagram who are young, female entrepreneurs in the fitness industry. @GraceBeverly, @KrissyCela. They are both very different but very powerful women. One has 3 businesses and is a self-made millionaire at 23 and makes sustainability the priority of her fitness activewear brand. The other is 26, a migrant and full time fitness app business founder supporting women worldwide through her self-made community.

**Do you think you are powerful, and why?**

I believe that I am. I make my own decisions and I am stubborn enough to follow them. I know what I want and where I want to take myself in life. I can love and care for others but I have also taught myself to love me and I think that is powerful on its own.

**Has feminism changed the way you view womanhood?**

No. I like to think that through my own experiences and encounters in life I have made my own view on womanhood.

**Have you done anything you believe to change the views of others (for better or worse) on womanhood?**

My photography back in France, I believe from feedback over the years, helped many of the girls and women that I photographed to feel powerful, sexy, beautiful and in control. Although they were the subject of the shoot, I managed to make them the centre stage and feel important, loved and like untouchable art.

**Have you ever felt pressured by the idea of womanhood?**

Yes, have kids, get an easy job, have a family, get married..... wear this, wear that, act like this, careful of this, don't go here, don't say that. Everyday. It's just a part of life. Doesn't mean I accept it and that it's ok, it just reinforces my opinion on how I should be and how I go about my life.

## Interview D:

What does feminism mean to you?

To me it means the push for rights of equality between sexes, men and woman.

What does womanhood mean to you?

Womanhood to me is the link between all women that is invisible and invincible. It means being defined by the things that you do, and accepting yourself for who you actually are, not what others think or want you to be.

Would you describe yourself as a feminist?

Yes, but a weak one, I think we (I) get bogged and trampled down by the small things in life sometimes and lose sight of the bigger picture. I would like to become more of a feminist, and would like to think that even if I am not, that I have raised my daughters to be at least slightly stronger in that aspect than I am.

What would you consider a feminist's ideologies and do you consider them to be parallel to yours?

N/A

Do you believe feminists have a bad reputation and why/why not?

N/A

Does your view on feminism follow that of the media's generally negative portrayal?

N/A

Do you believe we are close to equality between men and women (excluding other gender identifications for this question as equality is sadly much further off)?

No - I still think that women are not treated equally, or paid equally. In most countries throughout the world women are paid less to do the same jobs that men do, then are expected to come home, usually prepare dinner, complete household chores etc. It is changing, but very slowly. For example in sport, men are paid a lot more, have better facilities, and have better coverage. In some countries, nothing much has changed, a lot of it due to religion, as that are the beliefs that they follow.

What does a woman in power look like to you? (Not necessarily a boss or politician)

A woman in power to me is quite simple, it is a woman who puts others before herself, holds a family together, will do anything to protect those she loves and does not let others grind her down. I have been lucky enough to have visited and lived in many different countries, I have experienced many different cultures and religions. Throughout them all, women are the stable figure in a household and are a pillar of a I think in today's day and age I would say, Michelle Obama. Although she is married to one of the ex-presidents of the United States, she still retained her own identity, has always stood up for what she has believed in, advocated for what she stood for, and stood beside him all the way as an equal. Part of the great thing is he is her equal as she is his.

Did you have a female figure in your life growing up that embodied power, womanhood and feminism for you? How?

Not really, I say that as I can not say that there has been one defining person that has made me think of that. My own mum, for obvious reasons.

Do you think you are powerful, and why?

Yes and no. In certain ways, I feel that I am powerful. It takes a strong person to move to different countries, to try and create a home and life for a family and have a level of stability so that the transition is easier for them. It is hard to do it alone, and without the support of friends or your own family around you, and it is often very lonely, but achieving, it makes you a stronger and more powerful person. You often do not realise the things you can do, until you have to do it. I do wish sometimes that I had voiced more of an opinion, and that my opinion was considered and countered for more. I think in a way it relates a bit to the equality of equal pay. You tend to go where the money takes you, as that opens up more opportunities.

Has feminism changed the way you view womanhood?

I do not think so, mainly as I do not know enough about it. I do have to say, the 3 words that you have chosen will really prompt me to look into them more, which is a good thing instead of being complacent.

Have you done anything you believe to change the views of others (for better or worse) on womanhood?

N/A

Have you ever felt pressured by the idea of womanhood?

No, I can't say I have. I feel that womanhood is an integral part of who we are, and does unite all women, regardless of race. colour or religion.