

Take-Home Quiz

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Problems in Gender Studies (P.I.G.S.)

(exchange prog.)

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TAKE-HOME QUIZ

1.) Please discuss any real-life problems you may have encountered (either by being on the receiving or giving end) having to do with the concept of “the look” or “the male gaze” as propounded in some of the feminist criticism readings we’ve done thus far this semester.

Well, actually . . . on the first day of this class, I remember I was late and had to squeeze into sit at one of those single chairs-with-desks on the sides of the room because all the seats at the round table in the middle were taken. So, I looked down and tried to negotiate my way between the edges of the desks and the backs of the chairs at the table — which wasn't easy, because there wasn't much space between and I had my bookbag full of books flung over my shoulder, besides.

And, as I was looking down — and I swear! This wasn't my fault! I had to look down to squeeze by! — I looked straight down Beths' blouse. It was a warm day, I remember, and she had a tank-top-like-thingee on, and, as I mentioned, I had to keep looking down so I could squeeze by, as class had already started and I neither wanted to make much noise or risk stepping on someone's foot. So I got quite a view!

But then, when I sat down, I felt terrible. I mean, I doubt this was the sort of “Gender Studies” you had in mind when coming up with the class, right? I never felt so happy and excited and guilty and sorry at the same time ever before in my life. I had a total

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boner all throughout class — even when you were talking about bell hooks and her writings on capitalist imperialism, so help me god, I couldn't pay the slightest bit of attention — and I had to wait until I could leave the room and distract myself with a mocha and a cigarette before I could switch to another track. (I did jerk off pretty good that night, though, if you want me to be completely honest with you. I figure, it's only fair to say that, in the interests of full disclosure, and all. I wouldn't want you to think I can't control my own desires or anything, right?)

2.) Talk about which, if any, of the assigned texts we've read so far this semester which you've found most “problematic” in learning to adjust your thinking to accept, and why.

Probably that would have to be Simone de Beauvoir's The Mandarins, not because I have a “problem” with the text itself, other than that it's so vivid, I keep trying to put off reading any more until I know I have enough time to tune out the rest of the world and just immerse myself in it completely. So far, I've finished only the first chapter.

Does that answer your question?

3.) Describe something you've learned about Gender Studies not from a text but from one of your peers in class — be it an overheard comment, personal interaction, or what have you.

Uh . . . please don't tell Beth about what I said here, o.k.? I'd be really embarassed if you did, and wouldn't know what to say to her after that in class - or ever, probably. Thanks.

B-

Christopher, you definitely seem to have your thoughts a lot more organized than you've shown in your two previous papers thus far this semester, but — as I think you've aware — you still need to improve, particularly in terms of sticking to the subject and answering the specific question asked of you.

Also, I think it would be worthwhile if you paid me a visit sometime next week during my office hours after class. I think you may be used to being able to take a certain amount of, shall we say, "frankness" for granted when speaking to others back in Chicago but I fear you may find that, out here in the Great Plains, people may be a bit surprised by your "bluntness." It's not a big problem, but I'd hate to see you startle or offend some people needlessly if you honestly don't know you're doing it.

Although I will say, I do find your admiration for de Beauvoir's novel heartening. It's always been one of my favorites, and I'm glad to see someone younger taking to it, especially near the age that I first did. But: you really should just sit down and READ IT! (It won't kill you if you don't catch it all the first time around, of that I can assure you.)

