Feminism, Family and the Politics of Austerity



Nicola Barker

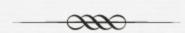
1 March 2014: Kent Critical Law Society Conference



Do we still need feminism?

"I'm at university and constantly get guys on nights out grabbing my breasts."

"Have had fingers put up my dress or skirt in a nightclub, had the lewdest comments which I will not repeat on here and have been grabbed and pushed. I have been told by a variety of people – all men – that if I go to a nightclub that's what I should expect because if you go to a nightclub 'you're asking for it' and 'that's what you're there for."



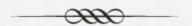
Everyday Sexism

"I am studying engineering at university and there is Facebook group for everyone in the year. A guy just posted: 'Why are all the birds in engineering ugly? I just want my pipe sucked,' on which another guy commented: 'Wait, there's girls on our course?'"

"The other day in class at university, I was sitting as the only girl in a group of 20-year-old guys, and they started making jokes about how they were going to rape girls after their night out later on ... I was really angry, but felt like they wouldn't listen to me if I said something about it ... or tell me to lighten up."

"Cycling up to university on my bike, I pass two men who yell 'Do you do gangbangs?' at me."

Feminism and the Family



- "Occupation: housewife"
 - "I went through issue after issue of the major women's magazines... without finding a single heroine who had a career, a commitment to any work, art, profession, or mission in the world other than 'Occupation: housewife'. Only one in a hundred heroines had a job; even the young unmarried heroines no longer worked except at snaring a husband' (B. Friedan, 1963)
- - "... women who want to craft egalitarian partnerships with men need to strategically deploy a variety of discourses and engage in a raft of different practices to manage the situational contexts that constitute their lives' (V. Elizabeth, 2004)

Family in the Age of Austerity: The Housewife of the State



- Privatisation of care in the neo-liberal state
- The expansion of marriage and the demise of the welfare state
- Feminist theory becomes even more relevant than it was in the 1960s despite the demise of the housewife model

