



# The Challenger



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William Rainey Harper College Honors Program

## Pushing Diversity: Making a Difference or Missing the Point?

by Tim Ophus

“Diversity” is one of America’s favorite idealistic buzzwords. Often accompanied by a cool phrase like “melting pot,” diversity describes America, thanks to this country’s truly unique and wide-ranging citizenry. And this, to most Americans, is a good thing. Diversity is something that, at least in theory, seems worth striving for.

But why? Why is diversity important? It seems to me that there are two particularly obvious reasons diversity

is worthwhile: exposure and equality. First, many would argue that people should be exposed to others who are different from them. It’s important to understand that not everyone thinks and acts exactly like you, and by understanding that, you can expand your own beliefs.

Second, diversity oftentimes equates to equality. If a company or school wants to become

more diverse, theoretically they may give minorities a chance that normally they would not be given. By giving more people that chance to succeed, pushing diversity — at least in theory — should push the cause of equality as well.

Unless you are morally deviant (or just brutally honest), most of us would say that we

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## Japanese Women: Career Woman or Housewife?

by Kuniko Baba

What is the image of Japanese women? Very quiet and obedient to their husbands, doing just housework and raising their kids at home? Probably, until the early 1980’s, that was the traditional lifestyle for the majority of Japanese women. Nowadays, as the working female force has increased, various types of Japanese women have been born in Japan.

First, let me explain briefly three major streams of Japanese women. Some single women just pursue their professional lives to establish

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## Number 37

by Mirja Lorenz

I used to be a prostitute – just kidding. But if I were, I bet you would think differently about me, wouldn’t you? Would you feel uneasy and would you want to keep a bigger distance from me? “The world’s oldest profession” has always made people curious and fascinated yet at the same time deterred.

Hamburg, one Saturday night at the age of sixteen: we, a group of teenage girls accompanied by some older, male friends (making us almost legal), are strolling along the Reeperbahn in St. Pauli, the red-light district in Hamburg, Germany. The lively, curious atmosphere and all the shady characters make us feel high with excitement

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## Diversity: More Than the Color of Your Skin by Brian Bellows

Jocks, Emo kids, metal heads, stoners, headbangers, faggots, nerds, dorks, geeks, gangstas, rappers . . . if you go to school there is a category that fits you. This empirical truth is the doldrums of school: people are allocated labels based on their outward appearance and ideas. Anyone who has attended a high school has been labeled something during their time in school. These names are not just derogatory insults, but actual cliques that exist within the vast majority of schools. If there is any doubt as to the veracity of this claim I implore you to enter any school and ask a random kid what clique he is in, and if he has ever been made fun of. The repercussions of such cliques can be seen in the Columbine massacre and the push for school uniforms. With racism dwindling in America, a new racism has increased exponentially: cultural racism. When I went back to my old high school in order to pick up my transcript, I witnessed this phenomenon firsthand.

The blue lacquered walls brought back both nostalgia and wonder at how the school had changed. A white person with bleached Eminem style hair was walking with a skinny thick bespectacled African American, both of them clad in smoky gray PE shirts and baggy shorts. As I passed them, I noticed the boys were arguing. "Dumb freaking Emo kid, why do you listen to that moron music? You're wasting my batteries." The African-American retorted, "It's better than that whiny synthesized rap crap you listen to. Rap is crap." The two boys had a dialogue about this for several minutes in the Student Services office as I waited for my transcripts, and that was when an epiphany hit me. These two boys were good friends, but there was a considerable wedge between them; they both had different musical tastes. I was awestruck by the fact that the white boy had ignored the fact that the other boy was of African-American

descent entirely, and targeted the fact that he was an "Emo kid." I ruminated heavily over this and pondered, is it possible we have abolished racism, only to have a new cultural racism based on likes, dislikes, and activities fill its place? After leaving, I began to ponder what my high school had become after I graduated.

There were many questions left unanswered, so I sought out two people from the most prominent subcultures and interviewed them. I procured an in-depth interview from three sources that wanted their school kept anonymous, and would only speak to me on the condition I did not print their names or identity.

**Brian:** It's a pleasure to meet you. Please describe yourself, your clothing, and your subculture in your own words.

**Anonymous Source:** Heavy metal, with a dash of punk.

**Brian:** What are your friends like?

**AS:** We stick with our own kinds.



**Brian:** Do you mean white people?

**AS:** No, not at all. I mean heavy metal people. We have specific tables in the cafeteria where we sit. My group sits near the wall.

**Brian:** What are relations like between you and other cliques?

**AS:** There is a lot of tension generally.

**Brian:** What are your teachers like, and how do they treat you?

**AS:** I would say I [expletive removed] dislike my teachers, but you know what, they would send me to the principal's office for that! The school has gotten paranoid. Ever since Columbine they have been beefing up all of these security measures, and it's all bullshit. Now, if a kid says he hates his parents, they send him to the school psychologist. The teachers are really nasty here. If you play sports, they'll try and help you out in classes, but if you don't, then they

don't give a [expletive removed]. They have covered the place with cameras. It didn't help anything. Now the fights all take place in the bathrooms where there aren't cameras. It's just like prison. They are even thinking about uniforms.

**Brian:** It sounds like it would be impossible to learn under those conditions. What are the teachers like to kids of different ethnicities?

**AS:** They don't really care if you are a different color or anything. All they care about is if you can play basketball, or if you're a troublemaker. They don't even care about how well you do in school. The kids my age are the same way. We have white gangsters and black gangsters, and they all get treated the same way.

**Brian:** Are you made fun of?

**AS:** Getting made fun of is a part of life here. I used to dress normal, but they picked on me even back then. If you try hard in school, don't bully other people, and aren't in any sports, those three, then you are going to be made fun of badly no matter what.

After interviewing him, I needed another perspective. His point of view painted a bleak picture of the school, one that I knew all too well. Like my first source, I also was isolated from the jock culture. I was more attuned to the heavy metal culture. However, I had spent a year on the track team, and I did receive High Effort Awards from both of my high school PE teachers; while those days have long since vanished, I remembered I had the number of a jock guy at the bottom of my sock drawer whom I used to lift weights with. He was also a junior in high school, so I would have a fresh perspective. After digging it out, I obtained an exclusive telephone interview with him.

**Brian:** I'm pleased to speak with you, it has been awhile.

**AS:** I know, a long time man.

**Brian:** Can you tell me what sports you are on?

**AS:** Gymnastics, swimming, and I was on the basketball team for a year.

**Brian:** What kind of music do you listen to?

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## A Brief Analysis and History of the Gay Liberation Front

by Chris Poulos

"We don't want acceptance, goddamn it! We want respect! Demand it! We're through hiding in dark bars behind Mafia doormen. We're going to go where straights go and do anything with each other they do and if they don't like it, well, *fuck them!*" (Carter 215). The Gay Rights Movement had been around prior to the 1969, but the ferocity of the aforementioned speaker was an altogether new occurrence in the movement. The mixture of growing awareness, events, and organizations leading up to 1969 combined to be a fast acceleration from a Gay Rights Movement to a Gay Revolution. A pivotal point in Gay Rights history occurred after major resistance towards arrest during a police raid at the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar in Greenwich Village. This resistance was the very beginning of what would be a jump from the previous Gay Rights Movement to a more demanding, militant movement. This article will focus on the ideology of the New York Gay Liberation Front (GLF), the first GLF, as an example of a change in consciousness.

The New York Gay Liberation Front was a break from the Mattachine Society, an early Gay Rights organization. The first sign of disapproval was on July 9th, 1969 during a Mattachine Society meeting, before the GLF officially existed. Martha Shelly and some other members thought up the name Gay Liberation Front as an idea for a march committee. Dick Leitsch (a member of the Mattachine Society) heard the excitement this GLF idea caused and did not like it: "Dick Leitsche came in demanding, 'What's going on here? What is this Gay Liberation Front?' Shelley recalls: 'He was really upset.

He thought that we were going to have another organization. There were seven gay organizations in New York, some consisting only of two people and a newsletter. He wanted there to be one gay organization, with him at the head of it" (Carter 214).

Leitsch wanted control over the movement, but he was not on the same page as Shelley and the other Gay Rights activists who wanted to push the movement in a new direction. They wanted a more demanding tone, which is well represented in Shelley's essay, "Gay is Good": "Look out, straights. Here comes the Gay Liberation Front. . . Here come the gays, marching with six-foot banners to Washington and embarrassing the liberals. . . We want something more now, something more than the tolerance you never gave us" (Shelley 138). This growing gay consciousness went along with a dislike of the previous, moderate Gay Rights movement. This went out of Leitsch's control. He did not want the militant movement, but he could not stop the growing consciousness and demands of the gay community; therefore, he did not speak to everyone in the gay community. Eventually, there would be a split due to difference in ideology.

What started as an idea to form a march committee turned into a large organization that grasped the collective consciousness of gays and gay right activists all over. On July 31<sup>st</sup>, 1969, the GLF split from the Mattachine Society and decided on the name "Gay Liberation Front" to associate with the National Liberation Front, which was at war with South Vietnam and the United States at the time. The GLF represented a

more militant approach in gaining equality, discarding the 'go slow' mentality. As they said in their first interview, "We are a revolutionary homosexual group of men and women formed with the realization that complete sexual liberation for all people cannot come about unless existing social institutions are abolished" (qtd. in Carter 219). Its ideology was also rooted in Marxist philosophy. They saw the position of gay men and lesbians as a result of capitalism and would ally with other groups oppressed by capitalism. As a result they associated themselves with radical feminists and Black Panthers — often equating gay oppression with black oppression.

Ultimately, this would cause animosity and confusion within the organization and be a major criticism of the GLF. One of the first major controversies between the groups occurred due to a difference on how to achieve equality —consciousness-raising or a call for immediate integration. The group was divided almost directly down the middle. The outcome caused much fighting and the more radical members to leave and create their own organizations. Ironically, the demand for more immediate — I hesitate to use this word again — *militant* strides for equality caused the GLF to break from the Mattachine Society in the first place.

Though it was short lived, the GLF was important in two ways. It was (1) an attempt to view gay oppression through a Marxist lens and ally with other oppressed groups. We live in a capitalist society that is divided in a multitude of

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## Pushing Diversity: Making a Difference or Missing the Point?

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are in favor of pushing diversity, if it will in fact lead to exposure and equality. But does pushing diversity in these ways actually make a difference? Does it actually lead to exposure and equality?

To answer these questions, we can look to our own Harper College. Starting in 2005, Harper College instituted a diversity class requirement, whereby all students must take a class that in some way emphasizes diversity. The idea behind it is that students should be exposed to diversity in preparing for their future, just as they should be exposed to anything else.

Some students, whether they are pro-diversity or not, might feel that this is a burden. This is just another requirement forced upon them, one which limits the number of classes of their choosing they can take. College students should be able to decide for themselves whether or not diversity is worth caring about,

some might say.

On the surface, this argument makes sense. But in the end, I think the new policy really isn't worth fighting for a few key reasons. When someone applies to become a Harper student, he/she is agreeing to comply with Harper's rules and requirements. If you don't like the diversity requirement, you don't have to go to Harper. And those who were accepted to Harper prior to the diversity requirement do not have to complete it.

Not only that, but there are a great deal of classes that meet the diversity requirement. And most, if not all, of these classes meet another general education requirement as well. So, students don't really need to go out of their way to meet this diversity requirement since a class they need to take for a different reason will count.

In this sense, pushing diversity for exposure seems to be effective. Harper is exposing students to

diversity in a way that most people will agree is not burdensome. But what about pushing diversity to create equality? This is done here at Harper through a program called Affirmative Action, which is as volatile an issue as any. And deciding whether or not Affirmative Action works, in theory or in practice, is a daunting task.

To start chipping away at that task, it's important to know what Affirmative Action is. Affirmative Action is a policy in employment and education that is designed to eliminate existing and continuing discrimination, to remedy lingering effects of past discrimination, and to create systems and procedures to prevent future discrimination. These policies are commonly based on population percentages of minority groups in a particular area, looking at race, color, sex, creed, and age.

So does Affirmative Action

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## A Brief Analysis and History of the Gay Liberation Front

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ways. The complexity of division makes it hard for many to see that different forms of oppression can be the result of one thing; therefore, in order to simplify a broad and often contradicting matter, oppressed groups are separated and reified, leaving each group with their own fight for equality. The reification disconnects all the different oppressed groups from their one, common plague. This is obviously — at no fault of the average person who does not have the time, money, or mind to understand such complexi-

ties — a naïve view. The GLF made San Francisco, San Jose, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, Wisconsin, Detroit, Vancouver, and the UK.

also on an international level (i.e. associating their name with the National Liberation Front) and united under the oppression of capitalism. Even if one disagrees with my first point, there is no doubt that (2) the GLF represented and provided an outlet for a collective consciousness that wanted more equality faster. The number of GLFs that were created then and have been created since demonstrates this point: there now are branches in Chicago,

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## Japanese Women: Career Woman or Housewife?

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their status, as they are called "career woman" in Japanese. Some married women, who are full-time workers, struggle with working and raising their children at the same time. There are many housewives who quit full-time jobs after having kids, and they start to work as part-timers when their kids grow up to enter an elementary school. Of course, there are still many young women who want to be good housewives to stay at home dreaming about getting married to a handsome, rich guy. At a company, each of them is called an "OL" in Japanese, which means an office lady who assists other male employees, copying, serving teas, and doing some errands for them in the office.

The last type of women follows the life style of the traditional Japanese housewives from the past. My mother's generation, the members of which are 60 to 70 years old, used to stay at home because Japanese society needed them as good housewives to support husbands who worked hard from early in the morning until late at night. My 72-year-old mother, who was an OL at a bank, had a marriage arrangement, married with my father and quit her job. She raised two children. I remember she was very angry when my father often got back home after mid-

night from drinking and entertaining customers at his company. But that was my mother; many Japanese women *were* very patient at that time. As a result, Japan succeeded in producing high economic performance until the 1970's, after World War II.

Probably, until the early 1980's, my mother's lifestyle to be a good housewife at home was dominant among Japanese women. But the lifestyle of Japanese women has changed from my mother's generation after the Japanese government enforced the male and female employment opportunity equal law in 1986. Since then, many young women have been given the opportunity to establish a good career. When I was a financial reporter at a US wire service in Japan in the late 1980's, I often met some skillful female journalists, analysts, and professors who pursued their careers.

Following the law, when many major companies hired new female employees, they clearly separated them into two different job statuses; Sogoshoku (in Japanese) and Ippanshoku (in Japanese). Sogoshoku women are equally given a chance to work with other male employees and they are expected to be managers of a company. Ippanshoku women mainly assist male employees to do office work such as filing or copying and the chance of their promotion is very small. An Ippanshoku's job is similar to the traditional OL's.

During the 1980's and the early 1990's, many single working women enjoyed their lives, traveling overseas and shopping for famous brand goods, supported by the bubble economy in Japan. Those single women tended to live with parents, so they spent most of their earnings for themselves. They were called "parasite singles" in Japanese.

Many Ippanshoku women were looking for husbands in their companies and they often quit their companies just after they were married as the traditional OL women did.

Meanwhile, Japanese society and men could not accept Sogoshoku women at the beginning, so those women used to have hardship to fight with such a strong prejudice. They even had difficulty dealing with Ippanshoku women who envied them. Although Sogoshoku women tried to work hard, some of them gave up the job. However, some tough Sogoshoku women overcame the hardship and then established their careers by their strong efforts. But they faced another big problem...marriage. It was very difficult for them to find husbands who fit their career status or satisfied their high demands.

In 1990, in "I May Not Marry Syndrome," Shiho Tanimura, a writer, explained why Japanese women did not want to

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## Number 37

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and curiosity on one side, mixed with disgust and a little fright on the other. We giggle when these pretty, pleasant, young and absolutely normal-looking girls are wagging their legs at street corners, soliciting to more-or-less pleasant, more-or-less young, but definitely normal-looking customers. Whenever one of the numerous policemen peers at us, we abruptly try to refrain from giggling and fake a qualified, bored look instead. What an exciting night.

Düsseldorf, about ten years later: my train to work is approaching Düsseldorf. After turning around the last corner, very slowly, on the left side, we pass the well-known hotel with the huge numbered windows. Some of the windows are covered by curtains whereas in others, beautiful women are posing in skimpy clothes. Watching these women on this grey, rainy day, around noon, accompanied by the monotone rhythm of the train trundling over the rails, my thoughts are carried away. I imagine the men who conveniently pick a woman as from a menu, right from the train at any time of the day. In my thoughts, I follow one of these men to the hotel, even slip with him into the room of his chosen whore. When the next train approaches, window 37 will be covered by curtains. What might be the daily life of number 37? How old is she? Is she happy with her life? And finally, what is her

name? Sadly, most likely she is not happy. Most likely, she desperately longs for another life. In my thoughts, number 37 has long, dark, shiny hair, a beautiful body, but empty eyes. She looks like she should be full of life, but somebody blew out her spirit a long time ago, when she became one of the 90% of foreign prostitutes who came to Germany as victims of trafficking.

In trafficking, many young women are first captured with dastardly tricks, then shipped to several countries, just like slaves, and finally forced into prostitution. According to the website [coatnet.org](http://www.coatnet.org), there are three common methods of trafficking. First, advertisements offer "lucrative job opportunities in foreign countries for low-skilled jobs, including a trip [for example] to Germany. . . ." But first, the women have to advance a considerable one-time amount of money, for which they often run into debt which they can never pay back. Second, dubious "marriage agencies," often via the internet, connect women with men who apparently want to marry. These men first promise to marry the women later, then take advantage of them with a fake relationship, and when the trust is established, coerce the women into prostitution. The last popular method to capture women for prostitution is called "second wave." A victim of trafficking returns home and is either forced to recruit her friends, or she tries to buy herself free. Her urgency and

her "trustworthiness" make it easy for her to engage others. "Traffickers use violence, threats and other forms of coercion to force women to work against their will. . . . Many [women] suffer from infectious diseases, sexually transmitted diseases, injuries from violence, drug and alcohol addiction, depression and other mental health problems as a result of trauma" ([www.coatnet.org](http://www.coatnet.org)). Thinking about the fate of number 37 on the grey, rainy day, around noon, accompanied by the monotone rhythm of the train trundling over the rails, is not very exciting.

Obviously, prostitution brings exploitation, violence, humiliation, diseases, and even death to women only to satisfy both masses of sex-obsessed men, and if traffickers or pimps are involved, the latter's greed for money. Solving the problem of prostitution is not easy, and several countries are struggling with developing strategies and laws to avoid prostitution. Some countries, such as most parts of the USA, strictly prohibit prostitution. Yet "the world's oldest profession" is not to be erased. It tenaciously clings to every country and, besides bringing crimes, points to its presence like an annoying stain on the country's white carpet. Unfortunately, being illegal, involuntary prostitutes are punished in multiple ways. They first become victims of crimes but are now illegal themselves. As a result, they cannot officially bene-

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## The Truth Lies Behind the Bible — an Anecdote

by: Mirja Lorenz

A group of Amish men with stiff, cold fingers and wet, numb feet are dropping their tools. All of them wear enormous beards, suspenders, and very old-fashioned hats. Their language is strange; it is not really German, but kind of. Different. Nostalgic. Like in another period of time. After long hours of hard work in the coldness of the winter, it is finally dusk. A last look at their daily, honest work, then they can leave.

Clattering hooves on the street.  
From a distance, dimmed,  
welcoming lights in the  
windows.  
Warmth—without electricity.  
Food—without microwave.  
Wife and children  
waiting—cozy—Home.

I, too, want to sit in their wooden rocking chair, wrapped in a blanket, warming my fingers at

their oven, smelling their burning wood, and drinking hot chocolate with milk from the cows I hear mooing outside. I want to give my TV away and listen to an ancient family story instead. I want to exchange my car for a horse, my light bulbs for candles, and my heating for a crackling fire. I want their purity, their innocence, their nostalgia.

The next morning at an Amish store, many horses with carriages are fastened at a post, waiting for their owners. I carefully creep closer to have a look into a real Amish carriage for once. Friendly snorting horses and leather smell invite me to lift the holy curtain, just a little bit. What a sight! The seats are coated in fine, red velvet, and so is the cushion, whereupon neatly arranged lies a Bible. Golden letters inside and leather outside, always ready to remind world-inclined Amish on their true destination.

How many evenings decent Amish women might have spend sewing the velvet with endless patience and pure love? I reverentially touch the noble textile, hoping that some holy purity glides over to me.

But what is that? There, behind the Bible and the cushion, must be something else.

I lean forward, farther into the carriage, into the secret, private room, where I certainly don't belong, but I just cannot resist! By the time I reach the cushion, almost my whole body has vanished inside. Hopefully, the owner wouldn't come back right in this moment. But I only have to move the cushion slightly, and then I — too late. This step was one step too far. All magic, all secret promptly melts into a gaping void. Behind the bible, covered by the velvet cushion, I finally reveal the truth: McDonald's garbage, carelessly thrown into the corner.

## Japanese Women: Career Woman or Housewife?

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Japanese women did not want to marry. "Tanimura asserted in the book that an unmarried working woman including both Sogoshoku and Ippanshoku might be happier if she cannot find the right person" (<http://media.excite.co.jp/book/news/topics/068/p01.html>).

But I have seen many young women lose their ways or the purpose of their lives without

satisfying their jobs. They just wanted to quit the job and get married to escape from the unhappy reality.

Therefore, the average age of their first marriage has been higher and higher every year. The trend still continues. According to a 2005 report by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, the average age of their first marriage in 2004 was

27.8 years old, up 3 years from 30 years ago.

When they finally find husbands, Japanese women face another big problem. They wonder if they can have a child or not when they continue their jobs. Unless there is help by their parents, it is very hard for them to continue their full-time jobs. This is because of a lack of a

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## Japanese Women: Career Woman or Housewife?

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good public daycare system and a lack of the average company's support system in Japan. "The 2002 report by the ministry shows that 70 percent of women quit their jobs after giving birth. This figure reflects that the society forces the women to choose either child or job" (<http://osaka.yomiuri.co.jp/mama/news/mw603076.htm>).

Therefore, following the trend of Japanese women's late marriage, the age of having their first child is higher and higher, too. The 2005 report by the ministry shows that 40 percent of mothers were 30 years old or more when giving birth for the first time. The average age of having their first child was 28.9 years old in 2004, also up 3 years from 30 years ago.

Although the support system of some major companies has improved, this trend has become a serious social problem in Japan now. The birth rate in Japan has been sharply declining to 1.29 in 2004, down from 2.14 in 1973, which was the second baby boom, according to a 2005 report by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare. This rate is low among major countries. The birth rate in the US was 2.04 in 2003 (<http://www8.cao.go.jp/shoushi/whitepaper/w-2005/17webhonpen/html/n1410020.html>).

My sister, who was a manager of a subsidiary of a major sports newspaper, recently quit

the job because she was very tired of long-hour working, raising her 5-year-old child and housekeeping. Her parents, who live nearby, used to pick up the child and took care of her until late at night when her mother came back home every day. I remember she often said that she really wanted to have a second child, but it was impossible for her if she continued the job. I think she is now mentally happier than before, although her family income is reduced.



I had my first son when I was 35 years old and I continued my job as a freelance journalist. It was very hard for me to work with a baby at home. Whenever I interviewed people, I took my son to my parents' place and I wrote articles while he was sleeping. It could have been easier if I had used daycare. But I was satisfied with staying with him at home because I had experienced a lot of things before I had a child. I think many Japanese women may feel the same way and that's why the average age of having the first

child is getting higher.

One big problem in raising children in Japan is that mothers have too much responsibility because of an accelerated nuclear family trend and a lack of help from husbands who are working for long hours. The babysitting system is limited to certain families because Japanese people do not have a custom to use babysitters like other countries. So many young Japanese mothers tend to suffer from raising children by themselves.

As a result, a lot of my female friends, who have elementary school children, start to work as part-timers. They used to be stay-at-home-moms until their children were preschoolers (Japanese preschools include kindergartens). But once they earn sufficient time, they do not want to stay home any more. They deal with simple part-time jobs in the daytime during their children's school time and take care of children and husbands at home. This is the average Japanese mother.

However, Japanese women's magazines report on the luxurious, elegant life style of rich housewives who live in the uptown area of Tokyo. They wear brand clothes and drive expensive foreign

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## Number 37

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fit from necessary health check ups. Also, they have difficulties to find apartments, loans, and other basic necessities. They are not protected from abusive customer behavior. Finally, labeled with the dirty stigma of prostitution, they are totally excluded from society in any social way. As Janice G. Raymond puts it, a whore in a country where prostitution is illegal is “punished for her own exploitation” (Prostitution Research & Education Website).

Other countries, such as the Netherlands, have legalized prostitution. They accept the fact that prostitution will always bloom, whether legal or illegal. Therefore, they don’t focus on abolishing prostitution, but on helping the prostitutes instead. In an attempt to put an end at least to pimping and trafficking, prostitutes in the Netherlands need an official license and proof of self-employment. Registered prostitutes can benefit from regular and free health check ups; they pay taxes and can enter unions. These unions protect them, for example, from violent customer behavior. Furthermore, prostitutes can make official, clear rules, such as demanding safe sex. In contrast to victims of trafficking and pimping, self-employed prostitutes are not forced to take every customer. The info website about Amsterdam claims that the Red Light District is actually the safest area in Amsterdam because police and private body guards are always

present.

Although legalization alone cannot prevent the social violence of the dirty stigma, it does moderate discrimination against prostitutes. In a society where sex work is normal and legal, as opposed to being a dirty taboo, people can discuss it more freely. It officially becomes a part of society, with all its dark and grey facets.

Berlin, a few months later: I am traveling to Berlin for a religious youth festival with a group of children. Religious events take place throughout the whole city. Enjoying the sun on a lawn next to a red light district, waiting for an event, I am playing and chatting with my children, when all of a sudden, one of the prostitutes comes towards me, holding one of my crying, limping boys at her hand. She tells me he fell and strained his ankle in front of her. He was calling for me, but I didn’t hear him because I was playing with the others. Of course I cannot say for sure, but to me, this lady doesn’t seem to be the type of person who allows anyone to oppress her. Nor does she seem to be ashamed of her profession at all. Rather, she seems to be one of these strong, motherly personalities who always defends the weak and doesn’t ever accept unfairness.

According to the article “Turning a Blind Eye,” “Until prostitution is understood as a million shades of grey – and until women in prostitution are seen as ordinary women, there is little hope of mean-

ingfully addressing issues of violence against women in prostitution.”

However, normalizing prostitution is not the ultimate remedy for prostitution. When buying and using women for sex becomes socially acceptable, then society and new generations could learn that women are subordinate sex objects. More, if buying them for sex is regarded as “harmless fun,” then, rape without paying cannot be too bad either, can it? (See the Prostitution Research & Education Website.) As a result, legalizing prostitution might actually trivialize, and thus raise violence against women.

Another dilemma of legalized prostitution is that only the prostitutes might enjoy regular health check ups but not the customers. It seems to me that these health check ups merely grant a healthy sex toy to the customers instead of protecting the prostitutes from sick customers.

Whether a country legalizes prostitution or not, there does not seem to be a way to wipe a country’s carpet “clean” of prostitution. More importantly, there is no way sufficiently to protect women (and men) from becoming victims of abuse, pimping or trafficking.

Although number 37 is most probably a shattered per-

*(Continued on page 10)*





### Japanese Women: Career Woman or Housewife?

*(Continued from page 8)*

cars to pick up their children at private schools. They work hard to let their children to study hard in order to pass difficult entrance exams for high-level private schools.

The Japanese media report that the differential of income between upper-class career women and other middle- or lower-class women such as members of the OL, artists, and housewives has widened recently. One recent bestseller, "Lower Class Society," by Atsushi Miura, mentions this:

Since [the] male and female employment opportunity law in 1986, Sogoshoku women who have higher salary have increased, while temporary working women in a company who are sent by other companies or part-time working women have also increased. Unmarried women increased. This means women's life style became various and spread out. (Miura 41)

Miura categorizes 5 types of women—the upper-class career woman type, the upper-class woman who wants to be a housewife type, the lower-class female artist type, the lower-class young, fashionable, heavy-make-up housewife type, and the middle-class, unmarried OL type (42-66).

Japanese society used to maintain similar middle class people, and thus the country

achieved its economic performance, and the traditional women's lifestyle to stay at home created a happy, stable family style and a consistent life value. But their working life style is producing a different life value, which affects their family style. I wonder which type of women feels most happy.

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### Number 37

*(Continued from page 9)*

son, let us not give up the hope for her that she maybe is not a victim of trafficking but belongs to those self-employed prostitutes who actually chose to be a prostitute. Maybe she does not suffer from violence and misuse. Let us hope that she is like the lady in Berlin who helped my little boy. Her body is beautiful and her eyes are sparkling with life. She sometimes enjoys her job, when she feels how much she can help her customers. She does not feel more like an object than a waitress who has to be friendly to every customer. Whether number 37 is happy with her job or not, whether she is a victim or a volunteer; in any case, number 37 is a person like every other person and deserves to be respected. Uh, by the way, her name is Marlene.







## Pushing Diversity: Making a Difference or Missing the Point?

*(Continued from page 4)*

work? Well, it seems to depend on whom you ask. Many believe that it does work. They feel that equal opportunity simply will never happen unless it is stressed in policies such as these. And by giving minorities the advantages they don't have now, future generations will be on the same playing field as the majority, eliminating the need for Affirmative Action.

But many feel that Affirmative Action is not the answer. The most common criticism of Affirmative Action is that it is reverse racism. By judging someone more favorably based on his or her race, sex, color, etc., this puts individu-

als in the majority at a disadvantage. Many also feel that standards are lowered to meet specific diversity quotas, which could in turn shut out more qualified people from opportunities.

Both arguments are persuasive, but to answer the question of whether Affirmative Action works or not, you have to look at the results. And clearly, there remain some pretty serious inequalities for minority groups in America. It seems to me that Affirmative Action, while a good idea spawned from good intentions, is a half-hearted solution to a systemic problem in America. The solving of this problem will require sacri-

fices from those who have something to give. Either more needs to be done, or true equality simply won't happen.

So maybe the question is this: Do we, as a country, really even want diversity? As I mentioned in the beginning of this article, it certainly is an idea that we're used to hearing in America. But truly pushing for diversity, with the potential outcomes of exposure and especially equality, will take a lot more than just Affirmative Action to come about. And so long as the majority is unwilling to budge, perhaps diversity will simply remain a happy buzzword, not a legitimate goal.

## Diversity: More Than the Color of Your Skin

*(Continued from page 2)*

**AS:** Heavy metal.

**Brian:** Wow, so you listen to heavy metal. I wouldn't have guessed from your attire. What are some of your favorite bands?

**AS:** Korn, Limp Bizkit, Slipknot.

**Brian:** I see you're not wearing a band shirt. Do you fraternize with many of the heavy metal kids?

**AS:** The girls (chuckles). No, it wouldn't be a wise idea. I hang out more with the jocks than I do the heavy metal kids. If I started wearing band shirts, they'd think I'm a poser or a traitor.

**Brian:** So you consider yourself pretty much a jock who doesn't enjoy others' cultures.

**AS:** Well I'm not like a jock jock. If I were a real jock, I would play football or basketball. Then you're in, and all of the cheer girls want you.

**Brian:** How do you like your teachers?

**AS:** Great, I really like my teachers for the most part, except for this crazy feminist teacher. Her head is kind of disproportionate to her body. When she teaches, she's

always rambling about women did this, and women did that. She's really a [expletives removed].

**Brian:** How about your other teachers, are any of your teachers also your coaches?

**AS:** Yes. I have had my basketball coach for health, and my swim coach for PE.

**Brian:** How were they as teachers, and were you treated differently as opposed to the other kids?

**AS:** They were both really nice. When your teacher is a coach, it's like being in class with a friend. My coaches didn't boost my grade or anything like that; they were just nicer when I asked questions, and I could joke around with them. They weren't so nice to the other kids. There were three guys in my health class that were either into punk or heavy metal. One of them had a Mohawk, the teacher always called him Mohawk man or the names on his band shirt. He wore a Disturbed shirt, and the teacher would call him Disturbed. That guy tried

harder than anyone, and the teacher always made these little jokes that cut him down in front of the class.

A major theme the first interviewee discussed was a heavy bias against those who did not play sports, and wore outlandish clothing. He made allusions to the fact that teachers impeded the learning process. So, if alternative clothing and ideas are distracting, why not switch to school uniforms? Even the second interviewee stated he was not a "jock jock," although he received better treatment from the teachers around him. Would school uniforms help to alleviate this problem? Only for the uninformed. Schools are more likely to underreport violence when under the guise of uniforms because of their homogeneous nature. After researching many of the school uniform statistics, most of the studies that show school uniforms helped bullying and fights were conducted by the school board and PTA organizations. These

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## Diversity: More Than the Color of Your Skin

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same organizations are almost always subsidized by the school uniform producers. This means there is a conflict of interest, and the data is biased.

Also, schools are likely to underreport incidences of school violence when uniforms are present, both in the interest of getting a favorable rating for school uniform studies, and because they cannot tell the bullies from the bullied. The most powerful evidence that school uniforms are ineffective comes from England, where almost all schools have uniforms. Bullying there is intensive, and mainly based on the school imposed differences. Schools that have uniforms not only quash children's unique styles but also create a new cultural racism: students are allowed to wear their football jerseys and soccer jerseys in class, singling out specific kids. This is done in the United States as well, as I have witnessed firsthand at Valley Christian school in Pleasanton California. Bullying was intensive between those wearing sports uniforms and those wearing plain uniforms.

School uniforms are actually a disguise for bullies. Harking back to my example of the two boys at my previous high school, even with PE clothing, they could easily spot the differences between each other. What feeds into this assertion is the fact that as racism is gradually stamped out, a greater emphasis is placed on people's cultures. Painting everyone the same color might work for walls, but human beings illustrate their differences in many arenas. Cultural diversity has become so intertwined in our society, and in some venues racism has been abolished so effectively, that children have turned to using the differences between people as weapons.

I have felt the effects of cultural racism by accident. During the winters I wear a trench coat. It is a nondescript black navy trench coat. When I wore my trench coat, people failed to make eye contact with me, frequently turning away. I even had several com-

ments when conversing with friends. "Are you in the trench coat mafia?" one of my friends asked, making a reference to Columbine. Another jokingly said, "People better be scared of you." I received more attention from those that wore the same attire, however. When I would smile and nod, I was frequently snubbed. I found this amusing, because I was merely wearing the only thick coat I had, and there was no symbolism behind it. The corporate-sponsored media bias against those wearing trench coats has been instigated because of the Columbine massacre. The tragedy at Columbine has been used by politicians on both sides of the spectrum to push ideas, and many subcultures have become victimized because of this.

When I wore a pinstriped suit, the results could not be more prolific. Girls looked at me without my looking at them, and smiled in a friendly way for no apparent reason. Office staff persons were generally more helpful. When the weather was warm enough to wear my pinstripe suit, I even received some comments such as "What a nice young man," from office staff. This is

ironic, because I am the same Student Senator, Honors student, and writer that I have always been. If a friend who cherishes me can change his/her opinion of me for a day due to my aesthetic, the ingrained problem of cultural racism is so rampant that our society does not recognize it as an insidious evil. Even at my former high school, staff actively single out people with band shirts, or people who write stories that are explicit, and hold them up to psychological scrutiny when they have done nothing wrong. This kind of persecution behavior is what actually instigates people.

Cultural racism has become the new racism; the first step to its elimination begins in the conscience of people. The vast majority of people have never heard of cultural racism, but they have a vague awareness of it. The concept of cultural racism had not occurred to me until I witnessed it firsthand in a high school. Awareness promulgation is the first step to fighting cultural racism. Until awareness is raised, there are no studies that indicate possible trends, data, or ways to combat this perfidious phenomenon.

### Editor's Note

The opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of the Harper college administration, faculty, or staff.

### Upcoming Honors Society Discussion Topic:

Wednesday, April 26: Controversies in Anthropology: Faculty guest: Helmut Publ.

All meetings take place on Wednesday afternoons from 3:30 pm until 5:00 pm in room L 329.

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