

Starting the Conversation

An Examination of Rape Culture Using *The Female of the Species*

A Novel Study for ELA 30

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Introduction

What is rape culture?

Despite the fact that the term has been used since the 1970s (Harding, 2015), the idea of rape culture has only now entered the mainstream and is no longer confined to feminist circles and gender theorists. Fundamentally, rape culture is a belief and practice of inequality. It is defined as “a complex of beliefs that encourages male sexual aggression and supports violence against women” (Buchwald, Fletcher & Roth, 2005, p. XI). These beliefs contribute to the creation of a society in which “violence is seen as sexy, [...] sexuality as violent” (Buchwald, Fletcher & Roth, 2005, p. XI), and language and actions towards women are often demeaning and degrading. The underlying societal support of a rape culture is expressed in a myriad of ways, is often unintentional, and goes unnoticed. From the daily use of terms like “pussy,” “slut,” “bitch,” and “whore,” to the necessity of programs like SafeWalk (a free walking service for anyone travelling on or around university campuses at night), to the average age of first exposure to pornography now being 11 years old (Randel & Sanchez, 2017), rape culture is both everywhere and nowhere at the same time; it is prevalent to the degree that we do not even know it is there. We have been desensitized to the point where “women perceive a continuum of threatened violence that ranges from sexual remarks to sexual touching to rape itself” (Buchwald, Fletcher & Roth, 2005, p. XI) on a daily basis, and we assume it to be a fact of life. We accept it as the norm.

Rape Myths

Though rape culture is everywhere, and although it affects both men and women, women “are the primary targets of the messages and myths that help to sustain [it]” (Harding, 2015, p. 5). Women, although we constitute over 80% of all sex crime victims (Sexual Assault Canada, 2014), are often seen as responsible for the prevention of sexual violence in society. We are asked to change our behaviours, limit our movements, and be conservative with our clothing. We are conditioned from a young age to live in fear, and warnings that our clothing and travel choices, alcohol consumption, and any expressions of sexuality are likely to bring on sexual violations (Harding, 2015) are a way of life.

According to Grubb and Turner (2012), while rape myths vary among societies and cultures, there are commonalities: “[societies] *blame the victim for their rape, express disbelief in claims of rape, exonerate the perpetrator, and allude that only certain types of women are raped*” (p. 9, emphasis in original). In 1999, psychologists at the University of Illinois expanded on these four common characteristics and identified seven categories under which rape myths fall (Harding, 2015, p. 22):

1. She asked for it.
2. It wasn't really rape.
3. He didn't mean to.
4. She wanted it.
5. She lied.
6. Rape is a trivial event.
7. Rape is a deviant event.

These rape myths are not only perpetuated and spread through the language and actions of our society, but are reinforced through the media, enabling them to penetrate both the conscious and subconscious mind of the viewer. During the 2013 - 2014 television season - a period which Harding (2015) refers to as “The Golden Age of Rape TV” - Margaret Lyons (2015) looked at 135 scripted dramas that were currently on air, and of them, 109 featured a rape or murder in the previous season. Popular series such as *Downton Abbey*, *Game of Thrones*, *House of Cards*, and *Scandal* all contributed to Lyons’s statistics through the depiction of the rape of their major female characters. In a similar study, Brinson (1992) analyzed 26 prime-time television storylines that contained references to rape. Findings showed that,

“42% of the storylines suggested that the victim wanted to be raped, 38% of the storylines suggested the victim had lied about the assault, and 46% of the storylines suggested that the victim had “asked for it” in the way she dressed or acted” (Kahlor & Morrison, 2007, p. 731).

Perhaps even more alarming is Brinson’s (1992) finding that a mere 38% of the storylines contained any form of opposition to the myth that the victim had asked for it.

Why Focus on Rape Culture?

While there are numerous issues to discuss in relation to *The Female of the Species* (McGinnis, 2016), such as notions of justice and vengeance, I have chosen to focus on the issue of rape culture. My rationale for focusing on a single theme is simple: *we need change*.

There is something fundamentally wrong with a society that is slowly and continuously eroding the freedom of half its population. Right now, we are passive consumers of a society that

acts as though it is perfectly reasonable to tell women never to drink to excess, and if they do, to never let their drinks out of their sight; not to walk alone at night; not to run with earphones; not to respond to the sound of a crying baby; not to wear ponytail when they go out; not to get in on the driver's side if there is a van parked next to them; not to pull over for unmarked police cars until they are in a public area (Harding, 2015); and not, and not, and not. Currently, we teach girls how to not get raped, but we neglect to teach boys not to rape.

It needs to change.

In order to begin dispelling rape myths and dismantling of rape culture, we need to both help our youth and to be helped by our youth; the classroom is as good a starting place as any. Through the systematic teaching of what rape culture is, what it looks like, sounds like, and feels like, and through the use of deliberate language in the classroom, we can begin to dispel rape myths, talk about what is uncomfortable, and slowly begin to recognize and acknowledge that what seems “normal” is, in fact, abnormal. Speaking about rape culture in classrooms is paramount precisely because rape culture feeds on, and is sustained by, the quiet complicity of the masses. There is a reason why the rate of sexual assault remained unchanged from 2004-2014 despite declines in all other types of violent and nonviolent crimes (Statistics Canada, 2017), why it was “the lone crime measured where there was no decline” (Kohut, 2015); that reason is silence.

Explicitly teaching about rape culture is necessary if we want current and future generations to become more than just social spectators. Students must be encouraged to question the status quo, to critique the hidden and overt sexism of the media, and to think of themselves as

moral beings. Violence, in all forms, flourishes when society is practiced in the art of doing nothing in the face of unjust treatments of others (Stein, 2005, p. 17), so we need to do *something*.

Considerations for Teaching *The Female of the Species*

On the surface, *The Female of the Species* (McGinnis, 2016), is a tale of revenge: a killer is set free, and the sister of the deceased exacts vengeance upon him, and on anyone who commits crimes which are similar in nature. However, looking deeper, this novel is a poignant social commentary on rape culture, and one that accurately reflects the physical violence and brutal language that has become commonplace in the social and educational institutions of our youth.

It is important for teachers to consider both their classroom audiences, students' families, and administration when selecting a text, and *The Female of the Species* perhaps deserves extra attention because of its sexually charged and brutal language, sexually explicit content, and (sometimes) violent depictions.

Due to the accuracy of the language and sexual violence in this text, teachers should be cognizant of the possibility that students may have already experienced some of this violence in their own lives, and be prepared to be a support system and direct students to additional support should they come forward. Appendix I includes a number of local and national resources for those impacted by sexual violence; it may be a good idea for a teacher to distribute a list of these resources to students before beginning.

The Novel Study

The Female of the Species

Synopsis

Following the death of her sister, the novel's main character, Alex Craft, unleashes her own form of justice against those who perpetrate sexual violence on others, forever changing a small town and its people.

Character Descriptions

Alex Craft: protagonist of the novel, and one of the narrators. An introvert who harbours a dark secret while trying to navigate high school relationships for the first time.

Peekay (Claire): one of the narrators. A drinking, swearing, sexually active adolescent who defies societal expectations of what it means to be the Preacher's kid.

Jack Fisher: the "It" boy, and one of the narrators. Athletically, aesthetically, and intellectually gifted, Jack dreams of one day making it out of their small town.

Branley Jacobs: the "It" girl.

Park: Jack's best friend.

Rhonda: owner of the animal shelter.

Sara: Peekay's best friend.

Ray Parsons: a tweaker.

Adam: Peekay's ex-boyfriend, who is currently dating Branley.

Chapter Summaries, Discussion Topics, Assignments**Chapter 1****Narrator: Alex**

Chapter 1 introduces us to our central character, Alex. The chapter begins with her explaining how she kills somebody. She provides details on how she has been stalking a man and plotting to kill him for a significant amount of time. Despite the fact she doesn't have concrete evidence, she believes she has found the man who has murdered and raped her sister: a middle-aged man that lives on the outskirts of town, who ironically feeds birds as a past-time, creating the authors first presentation of the motif of duality. Posing as an avid runner, Alex orchestrates a plan to exact her revenge, which she accomplishes at the end of the chapter when she is invited into the man's home.

Chapter 2**Narrator: Jack**

Chapter 2 flashes back to the search party that was arranged after the disappearance of Alex's sister, Anna, the night that her body was found. The second narrator, Jack, is introduced along with his small circle of friends: Park, Branley, and a girl described only as "Park's girl" (p. 6). The foursome heads out with the search party creating the illusion that they are out to help, but really, they are looking for an opportunity for drugs and sex. Their partying comes to an end when a male member of the search party finds them and tells them to leave. Only then do the teenagers realize that Anna's body has been found in close proximity to them. The chapter ends with Jack seeing Alex as she bends down to touch the remains of her sister's hand, bringing him to the realization that he is not a good person.

Chapter 3

Narrator: Peekay

The motif of duality is expanded in Chapter 3 as we are introduced to the character of Peekay (which stands for PK, which in turn stands for Preacher's Kid). Because her father is a preacher, the public expectation and perception of Peekay is one of purity and wholesomeness; however, in reality, Peekay drinks, swears, and is sexually active with her boyfriend, Adam - whom she has recently discovered has been sexting with Branley. She is furious that he has been cheating on her, but does her best to pull herself together as she arrives at the town's animal shelter for her Senior Year Experience. Upon arriving, Peekay learns that she will be working with Alex, whom she mistakenly calls Anna, due to their similar appearance. The setting is revealed to be a small town, somewhere in Ohio.

Topics for Discussion

1. Discuss Alex's contempt at seeing the man buy crackers to feed the birds. Why does this small act of kindness make him even more hateful?
2. Explore the behaviours of the male and female characters thus far. Do they adhere to the common gendered stereotypes? Do they challenge them?
3. Discuss Jack's understanding of appearances versus reality.
4. Discuss the language choices in chapter 2 which place men in an active sexual role, contrary to the women who are presented in a passive role.

Activity

1. "Analysis of "The Female of the Species" by Space" (Appendix III)

Chapter 4

Narrator: Alex

Alex is at the animal shelter and is thinking about the double standard between animals and humans: animals are put down “because their jaws closed over a human hand, ever so briefly” (p. 13), but humans, despite their higher logic functioning, get multiple chances. This is the first mention of an ongoing motif where animals are a metaphor for victims of sexual violence. This comparison continues when an anonymous woman calls the shelter to report a bag of puppies that have been abandoned on the side of the road, but she had not stopped to help as she had not wanted her children exposed to that part of humanity — a phenomenon also known as the bystander effect.

Chapter 5

Narrator: Peekay

Alex and Peekay head out to investigate the abandoned bag, and on the way discuss their beliefs in God. The girls discover a bag with three dead puppies on the side of the road. Peekay does not want to look in the bag even though she knows what is in there, but Alex does not hesitate. Peekay thinks about the puppies’ last moments and their presumed bewilderment that the driver had not cared about their suffering — perhaps an allusion to Anna’s last moments. She fantasizes about mercilessly beating the driver.

Topics for Discussion

1. Consider Alex’s response to the woman attempting to escalate the issue to her supervisor. Is Alex being sarcastic, or does she no longer believe in the power of the law?
2. Consider both Peekay’s and Alex’s reactions to the bag of puppies and discuss how they either mimic, or contradict, societal reactions to sexual violence.

Chapter 6**Narrator: Jack**

Jack and Alex are in the guidance counsellor's office and have just been given the news that Alex will be valedictorian this year. Jack finds the news incredulous and the audience is privy to Jack's sense of entitlement, which stems from him being a gifted football player. The reader finds out that Jack has a 4.0 GPA (motif of duality), and that he has been working hard because he is afraid of never leaving this town. Alex offers the position to Jack to the dismay of the counselor. Jack convinces Alex by stating that he needs it to get a scholarship so he can get out of this town, whereas she never plans to leave. After the meeting, while walking together in the hall, Parker attempts to touch Alex without her permission, and she punches him in the groin.

Chapter 7**Narrator: Peekay**

Parker is recovering from being punched in the genitals. Regarding their feelings towards Alex's actions, the student population is divided into two groups: 1) thinks it's hilarious that he was hit, 2) is concerned about his well-being. No one addresses the fact that he put his hands on Alex without permission. Peekay and Adam breakup over the phone; his reason is that he has a chance with Branley Jacobs (the It Girl). Branley calls Alex's reaction to Parker's touching her, a vicious and dangerous attack. Peekay catches a glimpse of the home screen on Branley's phone, and while expecting it to be a gratuitous cleavage shot, she sees Branley's little sister and their family dog eating an ice cream. This disappoints Peekay as it contradicts her belief that Branley is merely a promiscuous girl.

Chapter 8

Narrator: Alex

The reader hears Alex's thoughts on the power of society in dictating our actions. She describes physical markers within the school that show evidence of her trying to create her own path. The physical markers within the school (dented locker, ceiling tile askew) are her personal rebellions against rape culture. Her "violence" (p. 36) is against the institution, not the people.

Chapter 9

Narrator: Peekay

At the school's football game, where Peekay attends as a member of the marching band, and Branley as a cheerleader, Peekay watches Branley and fantasizes about killing her, further evidencing her blaming Branley for Adam's cheating. The following morning, at the animal shelter, Peekay and Alex find an injured and mistreated "dump" (an animal that has been left there) who is scared, and scary. Alex and Peekay try to help the dog by leading it into the shelter, but on the way, it bites Alex on the butt. The girls keep this a secret from Rhonda because they know the dog will be put down if the bite is discovered. Alex stays in a cage with the hostile dog while Peekay sneaks away for a tranquilizer. The dog eventually allows Alex to touch it, and we discover that the animal is female.

Topics for Discussion

1. Rhonda, explaining that there are more animals abandoned as of late, due to the economy, supports the statistic that when the economy is poor, there is an increase in feelings of helplessness and frustration, especially in men, which can translate to increases in violence against women. Do you believe this is true?

1. On page 46, the narrator again mentions the confusion that animals must feel when they are mistreated. Consider the author's purpose in reiterating this sentiment, and discuss why "the pathetic scraping of [the dog's] tongue over his paw in an attempt to get to a hurt he can't understand" (p. 46), causes Alex to come undone.

Chapter 10

Narrator: Jack

Jack can't get Alex out of his head. While driving, Jack spots Alex walking along the side of the road in the rain after her car has broken down, so he stops to offer her a ride. Because the rain has soaked her clothing, he notices that she has a "very fit body" (p. 49) and realizes that this fact had gone unnoticed by him, and the male population, because she dresses differently from other teenaged girls, i.e., nondescript. When they arrive at her house, Alex thanks him, and because he likes her and doesn't know what to do, Jack punches her in the arm. She laughs.

Chapter 11

Narrator: Alex

When Alex arrives home she feels guilty about feeling happy and momentarily forgetting about her sister. She thinks back to the last time that she saw Anna, and provides the reader some detail regarding her capture. She states that after Anna's death, she taught herself how to not only defend herself, but how to fight. She is now waiting for the day that a man tries to harm her.

Chapter 12**Narrator: Peekay**

It is Friday morning and there is a police officer at the school, so all the students are speculating as to why. Peekay and Branley physically run into each other in the hallway and a stack of papers is knocked out of Peekay's arms. Branley seems to genuinely feel bad about this. It turns out that the officer is there to talk to them about acquaintance rape, the importance of reporting it, and informs them that at least one in five girls will be raped. Someone makes a joke that they hope the "one" will be Branley, and a bunch of people laugh; the police officer then states that the rapist will be one of them, and this is sobering for the students. Comstock (Anna's alleged killer) is brought up and the officer states that whoever killed him will kill again

Chapter 13**Narrator: Alex**

After the assembly, Branley is upset and crying at the suggestion is made that she be raped; this suggests to the reader that this has already happened. In the hallway, Alex and Jack run into each other and Jack assumes that she must be upset about the assembly — both because her sister's murder is mentioned, and also because the police officer said that whoever murdered Comstock will likely kill again. Jack tries to comfort Alex, but Alex's inner monologue tells us that she knows she will kill again, and also that she has no remorse for killing Comstock.

Chapter 14**Narrator: Peekay**

Sara and Peekay are driving home from school and it is revealed to the reader that Sara is a lesbian. When the girls arrive to Peekay's home, her parents have a talk with both girls about the

assembly. Peekay's dad, a preacher, and her mother support the policeman's methodology for delivering his message even though several parents had already issued complaints with the school. They discuss the severity of sexual violence and the influx of drugs in the county, and cite the declining economy as a contributing factor, saying that "poverty breeds desperation" (p. 74). Peekay's parents are another example of duality as they are a highly religious family but are accepting and respectful of Sara's sexual preferences, and open to discussing the reality of sex, drugs, and violence in society. Peekay's father reiterates these sentiments when he tells the girls that no matter what, if they are in need of a ride, they can call him anytime and he will come get them. There is nothing they can do that will make them unwelcome in his home.

Topics for Discussion

1. Consider Jack's explanation of why Alex has "slipped out of the conscious thought of just about every guy around" (p. 51). Discuss whether this is an accurate representation of the female dress code, and if so, how things came to be this way. Discuss Alex's motive, if any, for dressing this way.
2. When Jack offers Alex a ride, she is hesitant to get in the car with him despite knowing him her entire life. Think about ways that women are groomed from a young age, to be fearful of men. Discuss some "safety tips" that girls are taught to avoid being raped, and the implications that they have for both the male and female population.
3. The police officer in chapter 12 states that rapes often go unreported. Discuss ideas as to why victims do not report sexual violence, and brainstorm ways that individuals, classes, and schools can help improve that statistic.

Chapter 15

Narrator: Alex

Alex's mother is surprised when Alex arrives home from school, despite it being the normal time. The audience learns that her mother lives as a recluse, is an alcoholic, and has been since Anna's death. The two of them have lived a very secluded life since the murder, as Anna's death was sensationalized. She seems oblivious to the day, time, and Alex in general.

Chapter 16

Narrator: Peekay

Peekay and Alex are spending their Saturday at the shelter, cleaning cat ears. The girls think that more cats would get adopted if they looked more like the cats on television — a possible commentary on how media influences perceptions and dictates the worth of things based on aesthetics. Alex asks Peekay what her name is, and Peekay is taken aback and doesn't know how to answer at first; she reveals that her name is Claire. She questions whether or not Adam was with her because he liked her, or if having sex with the Preacher's kid was merely a status symbol. Both girls state that society has defined them by the actions of others: Alex as, "that girl with the dead sister," and Peekay as, "the Preacher's kid." Peekay gives Alex a ride home and asks if she'd like one of her school pictures; Alex says she does, and Peekay signs her name, Claire.

Topics for Discussion

1. Consider Peekay's defensiveness when Alex asks her what her name is. She says that she "feel[s] a weird bump in [her] throat...like maybe it actually is important" (p. 83). Discuss the importance of identity, and the extent to which society has the ability to take that away from an individual.

Chapter 17**Narrator: Jack**

At a party, Jack and Branley are having sex in a room upstairs. Jack describes being excessively drunk, and that Branley has climbed on top of him and is doing what she wants. After they finish, Jack tells Branley that he doesn't think they should be having sex anymore because she has a boyfriend. She ignores him and begins to kiss him again. Jack begins to imagine that Branley is Alex, and calls out her name as he climaxes. Branley is enraged.

Chapter 18**Narrator: Alex**

Alex is reminiscing about a third grade field trip to a state park. On the hike, she recalls breaking away from the pack of tentative students and teachers and blazing her own trail. She remembers passing Jack and Branley, and the look of longing Jack had, not wanting to be held back by Branley. She remembers her only friend, Mike, the first and last boy she ever noticed, until now. Until Jack.

Chapter 19**Narrator: Peekay**

Adam and Branley are all over each other at school, and Peekay lashes out by smacking the lipgloss out of Branley's hand. Branley mocks her and says that she had not stolen her boyfriend, Adam, but that he had left her. Peekay attempts to punch Branley, but is stopped by Alex, who manages to calm her down. Alex volunteers to walk her to the counsellor's office, where they stop at the bathroom along the way. Peekay apologizes for her actions and thanks Alex. Alex talks about the fact that all people fantasize about doing things to, or with, others, and that in that

moment, Peekay was true to herself, but Alex stopped her, as she knew that Peekay's conscience wouldn't be able to deal with hurting another person. They see graffiti on the bathroom wall calling a female student a bitch, and they clean it off.

Topics for Discussion

1. Given what we know about rape culture, and rape myths, consider Jack's encounter with Branley on pages 88 and 89. Would this situation be different if the roles were reversed? Is it any more, or less, acceptable for women to coerce inebriated men to have sex?
2. Alex talks to Peekay about the duality inherent in every person: the primal self, and the socially constructed self (p. 99). Consider the societal expectations for males and females, and explore how this shapes our behaviours.

Chapter 20

Narrator: Jack

The reader learns that Jack works at a slaughterhouse, alongside his father, in an effort to save up for college. He discusses his father's dedication to his family and how this is demonstrated through his years of hard work. Jack expresses his desire to be like his father: a good man. On his way home from work, Jack sees that Alex's car is still deserted on the side of the road, and when he arrives home, asks his father to help him tow it out so he can return it to her. He tells his parents that he is "interested" in her — a phrase that he has never used before, and one that is understood by his family to mean more than just physical lust. When Jack arrives at Alex's house, he meets her mother and notices that she has a vacant demeanour.

Chapter 21**Narrator: Alex**

Alex reflects on her current home life with her mom, and remembers back to when her dad was in the picture: he was a truck driver, and they used to be a happy family. She recalls watching him take out his aggression on a punching bag, and thinks back to a time when she was very angry with her mother, and how she went outside and mercilessly beat the same bag. It was in that moment that she realized that she and her father were very much alike, and because of this that she has never blamed him for leaving them. Alex states her belief that if he had not left, he would have killed her mother.

Alex expresses her wish that she could tell her dad about killing Comstock because she believes he would understand, and her belief that he is the one person who truly knows who she is.

Chapter 22**Narrator: Peekay**

Peekay and Alex go to a party in an old church in the woods. Everyone there knows each other with the exception of a few tweakers, who Jack has warned the girls about. Peekay is drinking steadily and upon getting another beer, meets Ray Parsons (a tweaker). Ray introduces her to his friends and they all begin to make sexual comments toward her. Ray gets her another drink — which we can infer is drugged — and Peekay blacks out. One of the guys puts his hands down her pants, and they try to take her somewhere secluded.

Chapter 23**Narrator: Jack**

Jack is at the party, hanging out with Alex and Peekay. When he goes to get Peekay a new beer, he is confronted by Branley who is displeased about his relationship with Alex. Park speaks to Alex for the first time since the hallway incident, and he agrees not to touch her again without her consent. Somewhere at the party, Comstock's name is brought up and kids start telling the tales of his murder that they've heard. Alex interjects and tells them the details of what actually happened, but never alludes to the fact that she was the one that murdered him. Alex sees the tweakers with Peekay and confronts them about trying to rape her friend. Branley is cradling Peekay's body on the ground, and confirms that she was drugged. Alex hits one of the guys, and rips a piercing from Ray Parson's face, causing the group to flee. She and Branley tend to Peekay.

Chapter 24**Narrator: Alex**

Alex reflects on the question, "What's wrong with you?", as it was asked of her by the tweakers, and has been constantly asked of her by her mother. She thinks back to when her and Anna were kids and some boy snapped Anna's bra: Anna was embarrassed, but Alex was angry. She defended her sister back then, just as she stood up for Peekay. She acknowledges that something is different about her, but that she can't find a word to describe it; instead, she calls herself "vengeance".

Personal Response

1. Consider the party sequence and the way that it mirrors society's fascination and acceptance with the degradation of women in pop cultural party scenes (think of films like *Varsity Blues*, *American Pie*, *Old School*). How do you think this impacts the male viewer's understanding or expectations of women and parties?

Topics for Discussion

1. Do the tweakers have the right to ask Peekay if she is a virgin?
2. Consider the duality of language. Why is brutal language (i.e., "I'd like your mouth better with my dick in it, bitch" (p. 141)) and imagery less abrasive and shocking than the use of technical language (i.e., "All around us people flinch at the word *rape*" (p. 142))?

Chapter 25**Narrator: Peekay**

Peekay wakes up in Alex's bed, and is foggy on the details of the night before. She goes into the bathroom to inspect herself, relieved to discover that she had not been raped, and that her injuries are minor compared to what they could have been. Upon realizing that she has missed several calls and texts from her parents, she speaks to her mother and lets her know that Alex kept her safe after having been drugged. Peekay is ashamed of her attire and behaviour at the party, but Alex explains that rape is not about how women are dressed, but it is about power and opportunity. Alex also takes this opportunity to tell Peekay what she did to Ray Parsons; Peekay approves. Alex states that she and Jack are officially together.

Chapter 26**Narrator: Jack**

Jack can't get the sound of Ray Parson's ripping flesh (from when Alex ripped out his piercing) out of his head, and as a result, he is questioning his relationship with Alex. He asks his mom what she knows about Alex, and how you ever really know a person. She tells him that there is a part buried deep in every person that no one will ever really know, and that he should call Alex.

Chapter 27**Narrator: Alex**

Alex is worried that Jack will no longer want to be with her after her actions at the party. She is self-conscious that she has let too much of her true self show, and worries that because of who she is, her new friends, and her new life, will disappear. Alex compares herself to a wolf that has been caged for years, and states that rather than preying on sheep, as other predators do, she wants to find other wolves so she can stop them from harming innocents. She calls Jack and asks him if he'd like to go running with her.

Activity

1. "Your Government Mandated Sex Ed Curriculum" (Appendix IV)

Topic for Discussion

1. On page 136, Peekay talks about how certain attitudes and behaviours have been ingrained in her starting from a young age. Consider the societal expectations of male and female behavior, how they are constructed and reinforced beginning in childhood, and the potential for them to help or harm individuals.

Chapter 28**Narrator: Jack**

Jack and Alex go running together. Alex apologizes for potentially frightening Jack the other night. They kiss for the first time. Later that night, Jack reflects upon their conversation and realizes that Alex never apologized for ripping part of Ray Parson's ear off, but only for scaring him.

Chapter 29**Narrator: Peekay**

Peekay and Sara are hanging out in Peekay's room. Sara is worried about what happened to Peekay at the party. Sara wants Peekay to contact the police officer that spoke at their school, and Peekay's parents want her to press charges; Peekay is not comfortable with either option, and states that Alex's punishment was enough. Sara expresses her apprehensions regarding Alex and her odd behaviours, but Peekay defends her and says she wishes she could have seen it.

Chapter 30**Narrator: Peekay**

Peekay drives to Branley's so she can thank her for helping her at the party. Branley tells Peekay that she would stand up for any female, and alludes to the fact that her cousin was drugged and raped while away at college. Branley tells Peekay that she thinks Alex is crazy, and again, Peekay defends Alex. The girls begin to argue about Adam, but then Peekay pays Branley a compliment, diffuses the situation, and leaves.

Chapter 31**Narrator: Alex**

Alex goes to Anna's grave to tell her that she has a boyfriend. In her moment of happiness, she realizes she is near Comstock's grave and feels undeserving of such happiness because of what Anna went through. She runs from the cemetery.

Chapter 32**Narrator: Jack**

Jack is reflecting on how much Alex means to him, and how being with her is much different than being with all of his other girlfriends had been. He considers himself lucky to get to be with her. While at a party at Park's house, Alex and Jack are alone in the basement making out, and Jack stops in order to slow things down. He asks her to come over and meet his parents. She accepts and is happy about the invitation. Jack admits to himself that he is in love.

Chapter 33**Narrator: Jack**

Jack takes Alex out on their first date, but he is embarrassed about his lack of money. They go to a local burger joint, where Jack runs into a former football team-mate, Brian Spurlani, someone who was supposed to "go places", but who now flips burgers for a living. He is the epitome of what Jack fears his future holds: no education, a menial job, a young family to support. Upon leaving, Brian informs Jack that Ray Parsons is angry that he was beaten up by girl, and warns them that he and Alex should be careful.

Chapter 34**Narrator: Alex**

Alex is in the school gym with Sara and Peekay; she senses that Sara doesn't like her and again feels as though she doesn't belong among the general population. Across the gym, Alex watches a boy simulate sexual acts using a basketball, and wonders why no one ever does or says anything when males are behaving inappropriately. She references the old adage, "boys will be boys," and questions why it is still used as an explanation for impropriety.

Personal Response

1. Write about the first time you remember hearing, "boys will be boys" as an explanation for male behaviour. Reflect on how that made you feel, and how it impacted your understanding of what rules were for boys moving forward.

Chapter 35**Narrator: Jack**

Jack wins the basketball game for their school team. After the game, he introduces Alex to his parents. Alex accepts an invitation from his mother and the two of them go back to Jack's place to hang out for the evening.

Chapter 36**Narrator: Peekay**

Alex and Peekay are having a sleepover at Peekay's. Huddled together, they discuss normal topics for adolescent girls: boys, sex, other girls. When Peekay makes a comment about Branley

being promiscuous, Alex stands up for Branley, commenting that much of what they hear about her probably isn't true. Peaky discloses that, since childhood, she often imagines elaborate scenarios in which she makes the world a better place; Alex reminds her that in order to make a difference, we need to act in the real world.

Chapter 37

Narrator: Jack

Alex and Jack are in his basement, snuggling and watching a basketball game. Jack still worries that he is not good enough for Alex, and the night where they first met - the night when Anna was found - still looms over him. He asks Alex if she remembers their first encounter, but she only remembers their meeting at the guidance counsellor's office. Jack is relieved and plays along, following up with a question as to why she doesn't intend to go to post-secondary school. She responds by telling him it is better for others if she does not leave the town, and ends the conversation.

Chapter 38

Narrator: Alex

Alex returns home after leaving Jack's. Uncharacteristically, her mom is waiting for her in the living room, and asks her to join her for a scotch. Alex tells her mother about Jack, but in turn, her mom begins to talk about her father. She tells her how much Alex and he are alike, and how after he left, she had hoped Alex would become less like him. She expressed that she has tried to get rid of all traces of him, but it is impossible because she can't get rid of Alex. Alex confesses to killing Comstock, and her mother responds only with, "I know" (p. 223).

Chapter 39**Narrator: Peekay**

Peekay gets a text from Adam, asking if she has been talking with Park. She replies that she has. Although over her breakup with Adam, Peekay is amused that Adam is bothered by this fact, and the reader learns that she and Park have texted a few times, and accidentally, although she now suspects it was set up, ended up on a double date with Alex and Jack.

Chapter 40**Narrator: Jack**

In this chapter, we learn that Jack misses Branley's friendship, but that he cannot rekindle it as she continues to send him nude pictures and videos of herself. Park is romantically interested in Peekay and asks Jack for his help in getting the four of them: Jack, Alex, Peekay, and Park, to the church to hang out. Jack is hesitant to do this as Adam and Branley got word that the four of them would be going out there, so they too were planning to be there. Jack sees this as a recipe for disaster. Once at the church, Peekay receives an upsetting phone call regarding Sara's uncle, who is involved in child pornography. Alex is clueless about the uncle's history, so Jack takes her outside to explain. The audience learns that Jack had made an elaborate plan to tell Alex that he is in love with her, but the plan is foiled with the news of Sara's uncle.

Chapter 41**Narrator: Alex**

Alex discovers that Sara's uncle is a child molester. After she drops Peekay off at home, she goes to his house on foot and finds him asleep on the couch. She contemplates leaving versus staying, but upon looking through his personal belongings, she finds pornographic pictures of

children; her mind is then made up. Alex shovels hot coals from the fire onto his lap. He burns alive. After she leaves the residence, Alex is taken aback by a feeling of guilt and vomits.

Topic for Discussion

1. Research, then share, articles and statistics on current pornography usage and the impacts that it has on sexual health and contemporary relationships.

Chapter 42**Narrator: Jack**

Jack is kept awake at night by thoughts of Alex: immediately after telling her about Sara's uncle, he told her he loved her, and she said "thank you," which has devastated him. He hears sounds at his window and opens the curtain to find Alex standing on his driveway. As he rushes out to meet her, he sees that she is panicked and has been crying. As she is reiterating that it is not safe for others that she be allowed amongst them, an ambulance and fire truck race by them. Jack knows that she has done something terrible, and when she tells him that she loves him, he is ecstatic about the news, yet scared because she smells like smoke.

Chapter 43**Narrator: Peekay**

The reader learns that Jack and Alex have broken up, and that both are devastated. There is speculation around the school as to why they are not seeing each other any more: the boys say it is because Alex wouldn't have sex with Jack; girls say it is because Jack got bored of Alex.

Peekay acknowledges that Jack is the one person who truly realized what an incredible and rare person Alex is, and she is hurting for her friend.

Chapter 44

Narrator: Alex

Alex is heartbroken. She describes the pain from the breakup as being different from the everyday pain of losing her sister, largely in part because she and Jack still share the same world. She regrets not only telling Jack about her being dangerous to the general public, but about murdering Sara's uncle as well.

Chapter 45

Narrator: Jack

Jack cannot stop thinking about Alex. While she didn't explicitly tell him that she murdered Sara's uncle, he has put enough pieces together to know that this is what happened. He is shaken by the fact that she is a killer, but he also feels terrible because he told her that things would be okay, and then he abandoned her. After putting it off for weeks, he heads to the Christmas tree in the forest that he had decorated for Alex in order to remove the ornaments. Part way through, he is overcome by his emotions and he cuts the tree down using an axe from his dad's truck. When he arrives home, he cuts the tree into pieces, and without comment, his dad helps.

Chapter 46

Narrator: Peekay

Peekay declares it is time for Emergency Girlfriend Pact, and together, she and Sara plan a night of excessive eating, drinking, and hair colouring in an effort to support Alex through her breakup. Alex is grateful and wholeheartedly partakes in their plans. While sitting around the

fire, Alex offers her condolences to Sara for the loss of her uncle. Sara said that his death has made her family's life easier.

Chapter 47

Narrator: Alex

Alex wears the Breakup Tiara that Peekay and Sara brought her to school, and reflects on the fact that she has friends who care about her. She feels the camaraderie that is silently shared between females, and for the first time, feels like she belongs. Sara finds Branley's writing in a bathroom stall declaring Alex a slut; the girls draw over it, and Peekay congratulates Alex on officially becoming normal.

Topic for Discussion

1. Discuss and brainstorm reasons behind slut-shaming. Why do males and females slut-shame? Why is slut-shaming predominately female-on-female behaviour?
2. Discuss the repercussions of slut-shaming, and how a single incident of slut-shaming has the potential to become cyclical in nature, resulting in an environment where it is deemed acceptable.

Chapter 48

Narrator: Peekay

Peekay and Alex are at the animal shelter when Park walks in holding a box of abandoned kittens. The three hand-feed the hungry animals, and the reader learns several facts: once Jack and Alex broke up, Branley dumped Adam; Peekay is set to attend college; Jack has received an

academic scholarship to Kentucky, and Branley immediately applied to the same school; Peekay and Park are dating, and are going to prom together. Upon leaving, Park asks Peekay how Alex is doing, then suggests that she should still go to prom despite not having a date.

Chapter 49

Narrator: Alex

Alex discusses her belief that there is a karmic scale: that by saving the lives of small animals and insects, she can somehow even out the scale with reference to the human lives she has taken. She desires to tell Jack that she is making an effort to do good in the world, and also that she feels guilt, not remorse, for what she has done; however, because he is always with Branley, she is resigned to being without him.

Chapter 50

Narrator: Jack

Jack describes the day that he signed the full-ride scholarship papers. He describes the conflicting emotions he has about finally getting out of the town, yet, at the same time, missing the school and people. He says that the only person he would come back for is Alex.

Chapter 51

Narrator: Peekay

In an effort to persuade Alex to go to prom, Peekay and Sara bring her dress shopping. Alex is firm in her resolve to not attend, but Sara speaks to her about the two options that she has: never do anything ever again, or pretend like she's alright and live life. Alex agrees to go to prom.

Chapter 52**Narrator: Jack**

Jack and Branley go to prom together. On the way there, Branley can't keep her hands off him, and as a result, Jack envisions what his life holds in store: Branley following him to college where she still can't keep her hands off of him, his grades slip, he gets kicked out, they get married and have kids, and he ends up back in the same small town that he worked so hard to leave. He tells her to stop touching him. At prom, he spots Alex and realizes that he is still deeply in love with her, and that he wants to be with her. He tells her this, and invites her to the after-party, which is being held at a lodge. Jack and Branley head to the lodge together, and once there, she goes upstairs to get ready for him. He finds Alex instead, and they go for a walk together.

Chapter 53**Narrator: Alex**

Alex and Jack go for a walk and sit down to talk. He asks her to tell him everything. She tells him about life after Anna's death, that she felt dead inside and could not feel, and how the first time she felt something again was when Comstock was released. She tells him the details of Comstock's murder. Jack tells her that despite his knowledge of both Comstock and Sara's uncle's murder, he still wants to be with her and asks if she is able to stop killing. She says that, for him, she will try. They agree that she will register at the same college as Jack, and together, they will leave this town, start fresh, and get her help. They are both optimistic about the future.

Chapter 54**Narrator: Peekay**

Back in the lodge, everyone is startled when Branley emerges from the upstairs bedroom wearing only lingerie and is screaming for Jack. It is evident that she is drunk and has been crying. She begins yelling about Alex and approaches Peekay as to her whereabouts. Peekay sees that Branley is hurting and instead of engaging in an argument, covers her with a blanket and gently leads her to the bathroom where they can talk. Branley is heartbroken. While Peekay cleans her up, Branley confesses her insecurities and admits that she has used sex over the past few years. She admits that it did not make her feel good, and knows it was wrong. Branley discloses her belief that her physical appearance is the only thing she has going for her, and that the spell of her sexual appeal is finite. She apologizes to Peekay for taking Adam from her, and she says is sorry if she contributed in any way to breaking Peekay's heart.

Topic for discussion

1. Branley is worried about being traded in for a younger, hotter woman in 10 - 15 years.

How has society contributed to the belief that a woman's value rests primarily in her physical appearance?

2. Is it reasonable that many women undergo cosmetic surgeries in an effort to keep the interest of a partner?
3. Are societies and relationships that are based on the superficial sustainable?

Chapter 55**Narrator: Jack**

Jack is head-over-heels in love and looking forward to his future with Alex. At school, he receives a text from Branley asking him to talk. He reflects on the blow-out they had the day after prom and is expecting much of the same. She calls him and lets him know that she is still going to college in Kentucky, and that it was never about him. She also says that she would like to return a bunch of his things and asks him to meet her at the church. Their phone discussion is cordial, and Jack is happy that their relationship seems to be on the mend. He agrees to meet her in 30 minutes.

Chapter 56**Narrator: Peekay**

Alex and Peekay are headed out to the wilderness for a girls' night; there is a beaver dam Alex wants her to see. On the way, Peekay tells Alex that she is worried they won't be friends after they both leave for school, but the conversation is interrupted by a text from Branley asking Alex to meet her at the church in 30 minutes. Alex reroutes the car, stating that she will not deny Branley closure, and tells Peekay how much she, and their friendship, means to her. Peekay seems suspicious of the text and doesn't think they should go.

Chapter 57**Narrator: Jack**

Jack realizes his mistake once he arrives at the church and sees Branley lying seductively on the church altar, wearing only her cheerleading uniform and lace panties. He chastises himself for believing that she would let him go so easily, yet, at the same time, he wants to have sex with

her one last time. Ultimately, Jack tells her no, and Branley is angry. The two are surprised when Ray Parsons and one of the other tweakers enter the church, armed with shotguns. Jack tries to protect Branley, but is restrained; Parsons drags Branley away, intending to rape her. Alex enters the church and cocks one of the shotguns. Jack does not tell her to stop.

Chapter 58

Narrator: Alex

Alex shoots Ray Parsons, but is tackled by his friend. As she is hit, she acknowledges that “violence begets violence” (p. 321) and that she knew she would meet a violent end. Alex narrates her death.

Chapter 59

Narrator: Jack

Jack goes to Alex, who is lying on a pile of rubble. Her body looks broken and the back of her head is caved in. In her last moments, Jack tells her that he never had sex with Branley; barely audible, she tells him that she knows he didn't, and that he is a good person.

Chapter 60

Narrator: Peekay

Peekay surveys the scene in the church: Jack is bent over, cradling Alex's head; Branley is rocking to and fro on the floor, holding her panties; Ray Parson's accomplice is panicking. Peekay reflects on all of the things that she should have done in her life, but didn't. She picks up her phone to call the police, and as she does, is approached by the tweaker. He tries to convince her that he wouldn't have raped her on the night of the party, and that he wouldn't have raped Branley either, but that he was just along for the ride; essentially, he claims he was powerless to

stop Ray. Peekay feels as though she is in no place to judge another's actions as there are many things she should have done in order to change the outcome of the day.

Chapter 61

Narrator: Jack

Jack is in the hospital, giving his statement to Officer Nolan. He tells him everything. Jack is numb from the shock, but welcomes it, as he is not ready to face life without Alex. Next door, Branley is hysterical. During the night, she crawls into bed with Jack and apologizes for her part in all of this. He holds her as she falls asleep.

Chapter 62

Narrator: Peekay

Peekay visits Alex's grave daily, trying to reconcile the girl that she knew with the murderer in which the news and the town are so interested. Back at school, with two days left until graduation, it is evident to Peekay that Alex lives on in the spirits of the students who attend there. Peekay now understands what Alex was trying to do, and how, in her own way, she was trying to change the world for the better. In the hallways, rape jokes that would previously have been accepted are now shut down; women being touched without their consent is protested; and sexually explicit graffiti and comments are not tolerated. Peekay ends the book by scrawling a goodbye message to Alex in the boys' bathroom.

Summative Personal Response (select one: #1 is easier, #2 mimics the 30-1 diploma style)

1. What does the author suggest about how a character's existence within a rape culture impacts their identity?
2. What does the text creator suggest about the balance between the pursuit for cultural acceptance and the search for one's identity within the confines of a rape culture?

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Appendix I

Resources

Association of Alberta Sexual Assault Services

Northland Building

Suite 700, 901 - 7th Avenue SW

Calgary, AB, T2P 3N8

(403)237-6905 ext 3

www.aasas.ca

Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton

24-hour Line: 1-780-423-4121

(780)423-4102

www.sace.ab.ca

Saffron Centre

Sherwood Park

Toll Free: 1-888-416-7722

(780)449-0900

<http://saffroncentre.com>

University of Alberta Sexual Assault Centre

(780)492-9771

<http://uofa.ualberta.ca/current-students/sexual-assault-centre>

Canadian Centre for Child Protection

<https://protectchildren.ca>

Kids in the Know (Teacher Resource)

<https://www.kidsintheknow.ca/app/en/about>

Cybertip!ca (how to help stop the sexual exploitation of children)

https://www.cybertip.ca/app/en/internet_safety-self_peer_exploitation?utm_campaign=sl&utm_term=/self_peer_exploitation

NeedHelpNow.ca (helps teens stop the spread of sexual pictures or videos and provides support)

<https://needhelpnow.ca/app/en/>

Appendix II

Relevant Links

1. “Analysis of “The Female of the Species” by Space”

links for music videos:

“The Female of the Species” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGVHt5YibY8>

“Freedom 90” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=diYAc7gB-0A>

“Blurred Lines” <https://www.vevo.com/watch/robin-thicke/blurred-lines/USUV71300454>

2. “Your Government Mandated Sex Ed Curriculum”

links for Alberta Curriculum:

Grades 7-9 (p. 19) <https://education.alberta.ca/media/160196/health.pdf>

Grades 10-12 (p. 8-9, Specific Outcomes P11 and P12) <https://education.alberta.ca/media/160199/calm.pdf>

Appendix III - Handout for Student Activity

Analysis of “The Female of the Species” by Space

As a part of the instruction and creation of female archetypes and stereotypes in popular culture as related to our novel study on *The Female of the Species*, we will be examining the little-known song of the same title by the band Space, released in 1996.

We will begin with an analysis of the music video for the song.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lGVHt5YibY8>

Notes and Discussion Points on the Video

Goal: What are the archetypes and perceptions of women that are explored in the video? Are they positive and empowering images, as the chorus would insist, or something else?

Females depicted in the video:

Asian woman in tight clothing: related to ideas of Edward Said’s “Orientalism”, where all that is considered of Asian background is heavily romanticized and eroticized.

Blonde woman: the typical “All-American” blonde, also clad in tight clothing. Her mysterious hand movements are meant to entice and enthrall, making her more mysterious than she probably really is. Is the director saying that women need more than their appearance to appeal to men? Do they need to create an aura of mystery around themselves?

Short-haired girl: her image appears with the lyrics, “Shock shock horror horror”. Is this because she is seen as different from typical women due to her short hair? That she is more powerful because she is less “feminine”?

Bald woman: she is projected in front of fire, a typically powerful natural element. She is the destruction of the traditionally female archetype, coming across as more powerful in part due to her lack of hair. Is she more powerful because she appears more manly?

Black Cat: traditionally related to the female, is seen as evil, associated with witchcraft

General Notes on the Video

The women are dressed in tight clothing, while the men are in frumpy, baggy sweaters. The women are dancing for the men, as they are there for their pleasure.

Discussion Questions

- Is the band being ironic with their lyrics compared to their visual representation?
- Would you qualify this video as being misogynistic? Why or why not?
- How does this reflect the views of women in pop culture, specifically in music videos?
- Would this video be different if it were released today?
- What message is Space trying to get across with the video?

Extensions

- Theory of Orientalism, writings of Edward Said

- Development of the Blonde as becoming perceived as All-American Girl
- Betty vs. Veronica debate
- From All-American to Bombshell
- The changing views of women (think Marilyn Monroe)

Student Task

Your goal is to find another music video that demonstrates strong views towards women. This video can either be one that is empowering to women or one that is male-focused and dominated. You must be able to speak to the selection of your video and how it fits in with the pop cultural views of women during the era from which your video was selected. You will be discussing this video in your final Personal Response in this section.

Class Task

We will compare to music videos that were enormously popular in their eras (1990s and 2010s).

Compare the Videos: “Freedom ‘90” by George Michael vs. “Blurred Lines” by Robin Thicke
 *It is important to let students know that there are two videos for “Blurred Lines” : the clean one (the one they will watch in class) and one where all the girls are topless. It is interesting to note that it is extremely difficult to find the clean version whereas the topless one is all over the Internet.

Discussion

- Which video can be seen as empowering, and which is misogynistic?
- What messages are being portrayed in each video?
- Should these videos be considered scandalous?
- Consider the lyrics of each song. Do they impact what you see visually?
- Does a song like “Blurred Lines” perpetuate rape culture? Why or why not?
- Consider how big a hit it was, and the impact this could have on listeners
- How do the women in the videos fit or not fit with the archetypes created in the Space video?
- How do either of these videos relate to the ideas of Orientalism?

Lyrical Analysis

In order to gain a further comprehension of the song, “Female of the Species,” we will be analyzing the lyrics to the Space song. As you read the words, please annotate the lyrics with the following guidelines, in addition to your standard annotation:

- What do you notice about the lyrics as they relate to female perceptions?
- Do you find any lyrics to be empowering to women?
- What purpose does the repetition serve in the song?
- Find figurative language. What purpose does it serve?
- Consider the purpose of the Allusions in the song.
- What purpose do the mentions of witchcraft serve?

“Female of the Species” by Space

A thousand thundering thrills await me
Facing insurmountable odds gratefully
The female of the species is more deadly than the male

Shock shock horror horror
Shock shock horror
I'll shout myself hoarse for your supernatural force
The female of the species is more deadly than the male

Oh she deals in witchcraft
And one kiss and I'm zapped

Oh how can heaven hold a place for me
When a girl like you has cast a spell on me
Oh how can heaven hold a place for me
When a girl like you has cast a spell on me

Frankenstein and Dracula have nothing on you
Jekyll and Hyde join the back of the queue
The female of the species is more deadly than the male

Oh she wants to conquer the world completely
But first she'll conquer me discreetly
The female of the species is more deadly than the male

Oh she deals in witchcraft
And one kiss and I'm zapped

Oh how can heaven hold a place for me
When a girl like you has cast a spell on me
Oh how can heaven hold a place for me
When a girl like you has cast a spell on me

Oh how can heaven hold a place for me
When a girl like you has cast a spell on me
Oh how can heaven hold a place for me
When a girl like you has cast a spell on me

Songwriters: James Edwards / Francis Griffiths / Andrew Parle / Thomas Scott

Student Task

Write a Personal Response based on the songs and videos that you have studied. Your guiding question is: “To what extent do the artists of the musical pieces provide similar or differing perceptions of women through popular culture? What is your reaction to these female depictions, and how do you think they may contribute to rape culture?”

Appendix IV - Handout for Student Activity

Your Government-Mandated Sexual Education

While reading *The Female of the Species*, you have read about what Peekay has said regarding her teaching camp kids about sexual content, about how it lacks value. Over the course of your career as a student, you have been exposed to the curriculum at various ages and grade levels that the government has created for you with the aim of creating sexually knowledgeable human beings.

You have been provided with the Sex Ed curriculum for your province at a variety of grade levels.

You will be working in groups of 3-4 for this task.

Your task will be broken into stages:

1. Initial Examination

- Read through the curriculum at various levels. Note things that you and your group find interesting, have questions about, and feel need to be discussed.
- Note both positive and negative aspects of the curricular outcomes at each grade level.
- Consider things that you and your group feel may be missing from the curriculum.
- Consider the ages at which these outcomes are being taught: do you feel they are too young? Too old? Too little? Too much? Too late?

2. Class Discussion

Led by your teacher, engage in a discussion on the above points. What do you think about the curriculum? Do you think it does pre-teens and teens a service or disservice to learn what is mandated by the government. Make sure that your comments are constructive.

3. Make It Better

- You are tasked with improving the state of the provincial Sex Ed. curriculum. Your job is to work with your group to improve on what exists already, while considering what you discussed in both the large and small group settings.
- Come up with an improved curriculum for three grade levels of your choice. You may keep items from the original curriculum, but you also must include a minimum of 3 significant changes.
- Write a paragraph for each grade level explaining the changes you have made, and why.
- Your goal is to think constructively about the existing document, bringing forth real life issues and ideas to improve it. Remember that your main goal will be to create a student that is knowledgeable and prepared when it comes to Sex Ed.