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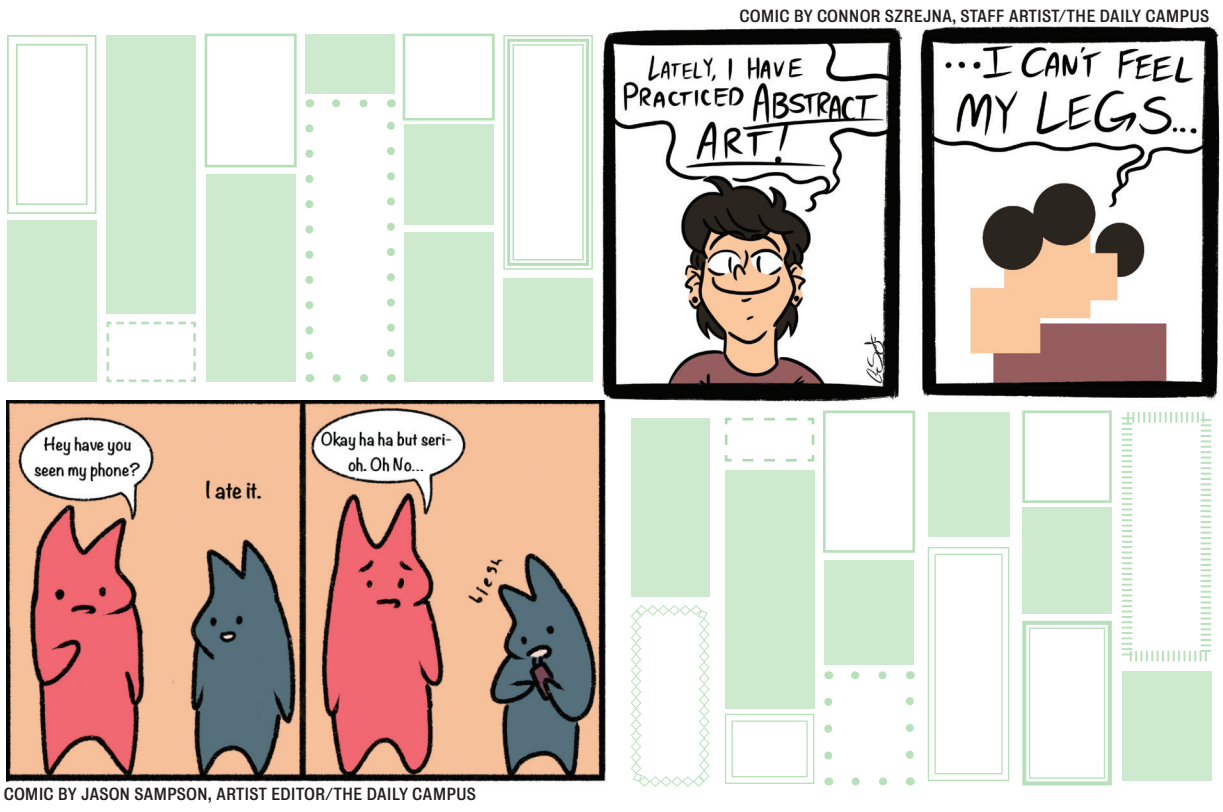

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Daily OPINION

Girl, Uninterrupted: In Defense of the Pick Me Girl



FILE LOGO/THE DAILY CAMPUS

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I like to think I'm a girls' girl. Younger girls on public transportation flock to me like ducklings, and I'll glare at anyone who looks their way. If someone's been left alone by her friends on a night out, I'll make sure she has a way home. I've body-checked men for standing too close to girls I'd known for mere hours. I support women's rights and wrongs, which is exactly why I'll never accept hatred towards the so-called "pick me girl."

The pick me girl spirit consistently manifests in a constant search for male validation. She's the girl who can't help stealing other women's boyfriends, because "it's not her fault she's not like other girls." Media portrayals of the pick me girl tend to fall under the "cool girl" archetype. Notably discussed in the iconic "Gone Girl" monologue, a "cool girl" plays video games, fixes old cars and doesn't need female friends because she's "one of the guys."

The pick me girl seems to be a unifying target: Women can hate her because she puts us down and men have a free ticket to making misogynistic jokes without criticism. Regardless, I will continue to go to war for the "annoying girl," the tomboy, the girl who seeks male validation.

It's important to note that women with stereotypically masculine interests and hobbies aren't inherently inauthentic. Not everyone who listens to '90s rock or fixes cars does so performatively; associating certain hobbies with a focus on male attention is a harsh generalization. Concern against women veering into masculine interests is hardly a novel concept. Mary Wollstonecraft speaks to this in "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman," notably in support of traits that would seem attention-seeking today:

"If it be against the attainment of [manly] talents and virtues, the exercise of which ennobles the human character, and which raise females in the scale of animal being, when they are comprehensively termed mankind; all those who view them with a philosophic eye must... wish with me that they may every day grow more and more masculine."

In other words: preventing women from exploring pursuits traditionally reserved for men (hunting, politics, the like) actively restricts our advancements in society. Berating women with traditionally masculine hobbies emphasizes traditionally separated gender roles, which is entirely unproductive. An interest in video games or mechanical engineering is hardly an indicator of one's personality.

Sometimes, though, the pick me girl is just that: a woman who craves validation. Even in these cases, hatred is the wrong course of action. A pick me girl hates other women because the patriarchy convinces her she should. Isolated women are easier to control, which leads me to believe that genuine pick me girls are the most deserving of empathy, kindness and community. Providing a safe space is the first step to helping the pick me girl break out of her patriarchal ideals. Clinical psychologist Dr. Sabrina Romanoff puts it wonderfully: "Modern society has heavily influenced the ubiquitous experience of the desire to be picked. We can help others break out of it by reminding them of their own value outside of the men they attach to." Wanting to be picked and loved is an integral part of the human experience. Recognizing that want in other people doesn't have to be a bad thing — we can use it as an opportunity to extend our own kindness.

At its core, the criticism against pick me girls is pure hypocrisy. Loathing pick me girls for not supporting other women seems reasonable until you realize that you are not exempt; your own loathing comes at the expense of other women. We're too caught up in proving ourselves morally superior to realize the degree to which we're at war with each other. Male validation is not a necessary component for survival, nor is it a path to a better future. At the end of the day, it's not the pick me girl that's your antithesis; it's the patriarchy.



Rosamund Pike delivering the infamous "Cool Girl" monologue in the film "Gone Girl" where she plays the character Amy Dunne. The movie was released on Oct. 3, 2014. PHOTO COURTESY OF NICOLE ALEXIS RODRIGUEZ ON WORDPRESS

Your Soul is Worth More than Your Paycheck

by Victoria Hancock
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Actors on stage at The City College of New York. The author argues that one should pursue their passions even if they aren't financially feasible.
PHOTO COURTESY OF THE CITY COLLEGE OF NEW YORK

A few years ago, my mother gave me the fortune from inside her fortune cookie. She didn't say anything, just gave it to me and walked away. It read: "Doing what you love is freedom. Loving what you do is happiness." Coming at a time in my life where I felt as if I didn't know who I was or what I wanted to do, these two sentences struck something in me, so much so that I put it in the back of my phone case.

I've always wanted to be a performer of some kind; this I've always known. As I grew up, the world seemed to tell me otherwise — not because I no longer enjoyed performing. Rather, it wasn't a feasible career financially. After a while, the world won. I convinced myself that I wasn't good enough to make a name for myself and if I couldn't do that, there was no point in following my dreams. The most important fact in choosing a career had to be money.

After entering college undecided, I eventually declared a major in political science. I didn't necessarily love it, but I didn't hate it. It was a "real major" that had a decent job outlook and could serve as a good base to becoming a lawyer, something I thought I could be good at and would pay very well. I was finally getting my feet under me, but I wasn't happy. I didn't care about my schoolwork, my grades slipped and I spent more time doing theater and a cappella than actual homework. I started to lose myself in pursuit of a future I believed the world wanted for me.

Simultaneously, I had declared a second major: theatre studies. To me, those classes were entirely different. There, I wanted to learn. With theatre, my grades didn't slip. I did my readings. I spoke up in class. I had fun. I was doing what I loved. I felt free. I decided that, after finishing my political science degree, I would audition for acting conservatories to hone my craft and finally follow my heart. This way, I wouldn't waste the time and money I had spent on political science; I would have a "real degree" to fall back on if the whole actor thing didn't work out.

But one day, that plan changed. The summer before my sophomore year, it hit me: why was I putting off my own future — my own happiness — just because someone else wanted something different for me? I wanted to be an actor, not a politician or a lawyer or anything else. Sure, I might live paycheck to paycheck for the rest of my life, but who cares? I've never loved anything the way I love theatre.

The further we descend into a capitalistic society, the more everyone stresses the idea of "following the money." Everyone is hard-wired to chase after whatever can provide more money, since money means status and security. Society even uses money as a reference point to success, essentially invalidating any other reason for doing anything in life. Even the way we discuss our lives is in terms of money as superior rather than how we feel emotionally.

Careers relying on subjectivity become frowned upon and discouraged, unless you're a once-in-a-generation talent. Very few are encouraged to pursue becoming a professional athlete if you only came off the bench for your high school soccer team. If you don't show exceptional talent, you are supposed to become "rational" and be replaced by something worth more money than happiness. It could be your one true love in the world, but everyone will convince you it's not a possibility. You need to suck it up and conform to the mundanity of a nine to five. While many people do find fulfillment in business or STEM-based careers, just as many find their lives draining to the corporate machine.

The point of life is to live it. You only get one, so why waste it doing something that brings you disdain? The happiest people I've met are those who stay true to themselves in both their personal and professional lives. Money isn't necessarily happiness. Happiness should be the journey you can look back upon, no matter how long it takes. There is no timeline for happiness. Countless celebrities began their careers late in their lives and still found success and joy.

This year, I switched my major into the acting BFA, a program that takes four years to complete, meaning I'll be in college for a total of six years. I'm terrified of feeling like I'm being left behind by my friends and the rest of the world, but it's the happiest I've ever been in college. Whenever I begin to feel lost, wondering if it will all be worth it, I look in the back of my phone case at those two sentences and remember that, at the end of the day, my happiness will be worth far more than my paycheck.