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## My Pleasure!

Miss Emily has a passion related to retro era, as if the spirit of the earliest Pin Up Girls lives today through a memoir lifestyle. All her life she could imagine her father during World War II appreciating a poster of the beautiful women while missing home. When she was five, her father died, and as heritage, the untouchable and desirable image of a pretty girl remains in Emily's heart. Her actual fascination, besides her other activities and work, is to be a Pin

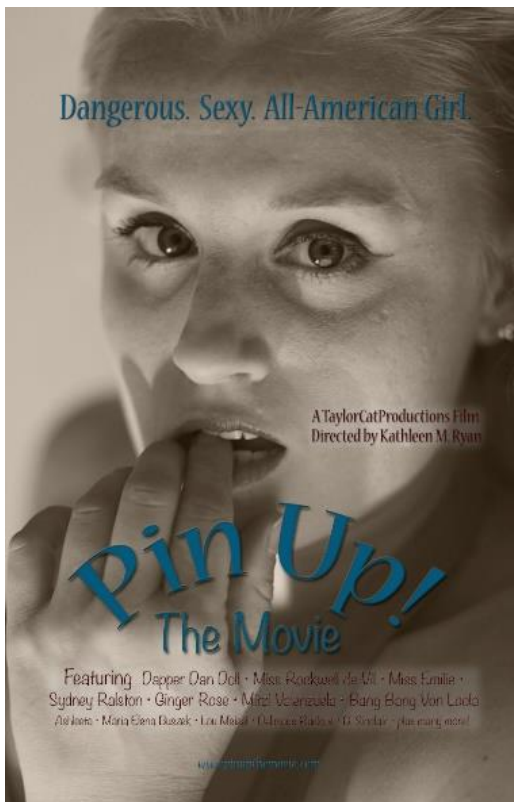


Figure 1. Movie Poster – Miss Emily, image from the film's site "Pinup! The Movie," 2020. ©

Up model, "I guess I kind of got it from my dad. He was in World War II. I think it is, in a way, almost like paying homage to him." (Pin Up! The Movie)

The contemporary Pin Up Girls are the ones who miss the 1940's vintage style. At that time, the models were astonishingly beautiful and has pinned a milestone into American's heart. They are

"dangerous, sexy, all-American Girls." (Pin Up! The Movie) Pleasure, desire, and sexuality belong to women's lives; guilty, shame, and misogyny should not play any role into this realm; they must be in control of their bodies, aware of their whole beings.

They are like the wise girl portrayed in Angela

Carters' short story "The Company of the Wolves". A girl and her hunter like in the tale "Little Red Riding Hood," engage in an intimate moment, as the scene when the girl admires the boy's

big eyes, big arms, and the big teeth. Nevertheless, Angela's girl seems to be wise and ready for the predator. "She will lay his fearful head on her lap, and she will pick out the lice from his pelt, and perhaps she will put the lice into her mouth and eat them, as he will bid her, as she would do in a savage marriage ceremony." (Carter 151) Her sagacity gives place to pleasure and domination instead of fear and devastation. The fiction rises the theme of women's power fighting for the right of satisfaction and survival. The nonfiction presents American women giving life to Pin Up Girls' personas and Burlesque times in the documentary *Pin Up! The Movie - Dangerous. Sexy. All-American Girl* which portrays women proud of their bodies,

### Dangerous. Sexy. All-American Girl.

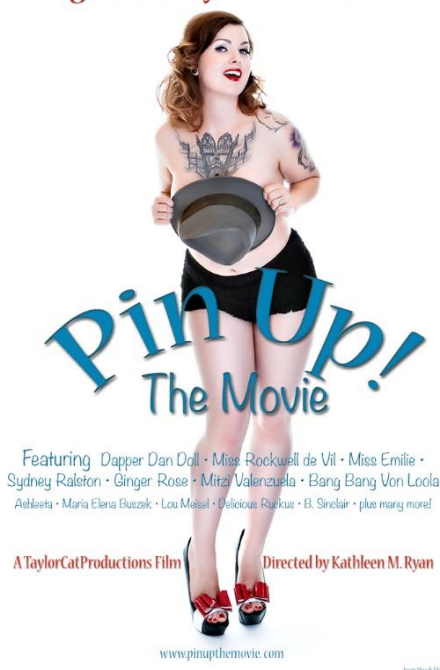


Figure 2. Movie Poster – Dapper Dan Doll, image from the film's site "Pinup! The Movie," 2020. ©

supportive among their sisterhood, and owning their sexuality. The symbolism of Pin Up Girls changed throughout the years from the Nineteenth Century to actual days. The role women played or performed in a miscellaneous of distinct media depends on the era, and it draws a dichotomy among the feminism movement. "On one hand, since women have been traditionally seen as sex object, feminism demands that society no longer focus on their erotic attributes, which, in turn, feminism downplays... On the other hand, because they have been deprived of pleasure and a sense of autonomous at-one-ness, both of which

necessary to self-esteem." (qtd. in Buszec 13) Women's desire and fruition have been shifted from a natural and healthy sensory sense into a prohibitive vulgar matter. Some feminist groups react against women who use sexuality to rise empowerment causes. They defend the

fair and important matter of equality to reach better positions in society, although the conquest of new positions can be achieved by embracing women, respecting the differences within the gender. Instead of acting facing the peers, all women should act against the system's bias in a wise way. According to Aronowitz, feminists are divided in groups. The liberal feminist who "endured pats on the bottom to succeed in the workplace," the younger feminists who embrace causes to face "bad behavior, like rape, rather than rethink tolerated behavior," and the radical feminists, "who want to see the system upended. Of course, this wing of radical feminism veered into cries of censorship and victimhood, endorsing a sexual moralism disturbingly similar to the religious right."

Women riding a bicycle caused a furor as men in late 1800's could not imagine a girl kicking over the saddle, while for women the apparatus was a "freedom machine," (Frank) as they could circulate around delivering suffragist handbills, and these independence days should disturb the opposite genre much more than the extra pleasure of being on the seat.

A woman's heat is not a state of sexual arousal but a state of intense sensory awareness that includes, but is not limited to, her sexuality... An aspect that is fervent, definitely wild, and giving off a heat that keeps us warmed with good feeling. In modern women this sensory expression has been given short shrift and, in many places and times, has been banned altogether. (Estés 334)



Figure 4 Charles Dana Gibson. Artstor Library, 1896.

“Doctors and ministers denounced the new-fangled vehicles, claiming that bouncing harmed women’s fragile insides and the friction of the seat was likely to get them aroused. To suffragists, however, the bicycle was the “freedom machine,” freeing women of ties to a male escort.” (Frank) A list of what women should do related to the bicycle confirms the horror caused by the coming of age transport. (Women on bicycles? The Horror) “There is an aspect of women’s sexuality that in ancient times was called the sacred obscene, not in the way we use the word obscene today but meaning sexually wise in a witty sort of way.” (Estés 335)

At this time, the representation of women through popular culture and the symbolism of Pin Up Girls posters are related to the empowerment of the “new women” fighting for their rights in society, and likewise other propaganda which starts to use women images to sell products in a connotative way using commodification of desire to reach the targeted audience,



Figure 3 Screenshots from MOTAT's YouTube account.



Figure 5 Author's photography from the book *The Art Of Pin-Up*. Cheap litographs printed to be shipped to servicemen in 1942.

men and women depending on the subject matter. Sexual desire, according with Solomon, is an icon when arguing about American propaganda as he discusses that sexuality representation has been changing from a more innocent content to an explicit one. "In a magazine ad for Claire Burke home fragrances...we see a well-dressed couple cavorting about their bedroom in what looks like a cheery preparation for sadomasochistic exercises." (Solomon 158) The representation of women as the desired Pin Up Girls has a

paradoxical connotation once one can argue about who was playing the role, deciding the best scene to capture. In fact, the history of Pin Ups includes various moments among the first theatrical burlesque era, the Hollywood famous bombshells, the War campaigns appellative



Figure 6 Burlesque Theatre. Artstor library. 1951.



Figure 7 Sophia Loren – One of the Bombshell's Hollywood actress. Artstor

cards, the Gas posters calendars, the artists self-portraits, and other publicity productions. The vast media surrounding the theme portrays various messages, and also target a qualitative audience.

Besides the fact that the Pin-Up girls could amuse of their positions as objects of desire, men mostly played the role of editing those productions responding to the enormous patriarchal audience.

Scrutinizing and looking for abductive explanation



*Figure 8 Author's photography from the book The Art Of Pin-Up.*

within the history of Pin Up Girls as Popular Culture, they deliver vast motivations to be publicized for more than a hundred years until nowadays in various media. The publications portray an iconic and symbolic image of the desired women. Behind the scenes, the strongest instigator managed by the men in charge was the sex appeal of the young astonishing ladies, whether to sell products, movies, magazines or to engage girls and boys in a pro war campaign.

“Regarding consumption outcomes, several studies report that sex can positively affect purchase intention and persuasion. For example, Dudley reported that respondents were more likely to try a suntan lotion featured in sexy ads compared to suntan lotion featured in a control ad.” (Shuhua 130)

The documentary *Pin Up! The Movie* narrates the experience of many American girls who have their glamour persona's exclusive names and play those characters in real life -

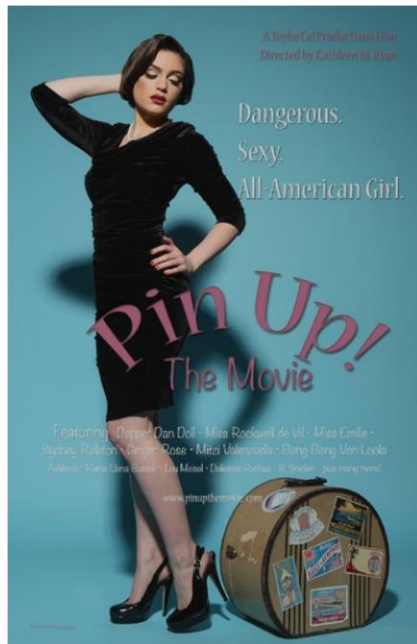


Figure 9 Movie Poster – Sydney, Image from the film's site "Pinup! The Movie," 2020. ©



Figure 10 Movie Poster – Ginger, Image from the film's site "Pinup! The Movie," 2020. ©

besides of their jobs - in shows, festivals, shots for magazines and other media. An enormous marketing exists to maintain the vintage hobby as shown in the plot, and each story portraits women in control of their choices inspired by the bombshells and burlesque theatre. "It finds women who are embraced by a female-centric subculture that invites men to look, but not touch or control. In this world, the pin up is in charge." (Pin Up! The Movie – Modern) The inspiration for the new generation performances comes from the 1940's 'Pin Up Queens' how they are called by the journalist Steve Sullivan in his book *Va Va Voom!* "va va vooom', any of a number of emotions set into motion by the vision – either in person, on stage, on screen or on paper – of a vibrant, healthy and often abundantly endowed female" (Sullivan 4) In the documentary's first scene, Art Baker, the famous presenter of a broadcasting show reads a letter from the 'far from home' Fighter Squadron 191: "This morning in our ships paper, we came across a picture of a lovely looking model from Pin-Up's magazine. Wow! What a morale booster..." He continues the show presenting a woman who will perform signing a picture to send to the

squadron, “Like any good actress, she creates her own characters.” While the painter enters in the scene, a background music fits with the era’s context: “girls you don’t need to know algebra.”

The clear misogynist content symbolized by the first scene depicted in the film contrasts with the main subject portrayed in the narrative, who are the actual pin-ups who does not open space to discuss about sexism. They introduce themselves as independent women with their families and leading their life story. “They are twisting it in a way that its best is very intellectual, but they are still aware of the conservative element of what pin up reflects,” Buszec comments about the girls in the film, opening the discussion about the dichotomy attached to the theme. Analyzing women’s symbolism connected to an assorted number of products and campaigns, since the Nineteen Century, the semiotic paradigm inserted in this context subtracts the particularity of a human being displayed in each media, reducing them to the same level of a product for sale, and a figure pattern. “When we are making combinations of signs, whether they are words, sentences, or outfits, we are faced with a series of individual choices where we can substitute one sign for another in the same set.” (Crow 44)

The difference between the actual Pin-Up girls and the past ones does not reside in the subject matter which is the same, although it is clear that the new context relies on the desire to portray a vintage style as well as depict the body figure with proud, furthermore, the condition of been in control of what is the content. Emily, better known as Rickashanaynay, express her passion about the vintage world, “I do like the 1940’s. Pencil skirts, wiggle dresses, square heels, swing dancing, finger waves, all of the things to go with it.” (Pin Up! The Movie) Within each story illustrated in the movie the audience is able to understand the



intense and powerful experience those girls live performing their characters. Among the activities inside the special world, the actual pin-ups have annual contests to participate, fairs to buy and sell vintage products, studio photographs and make up's productions for

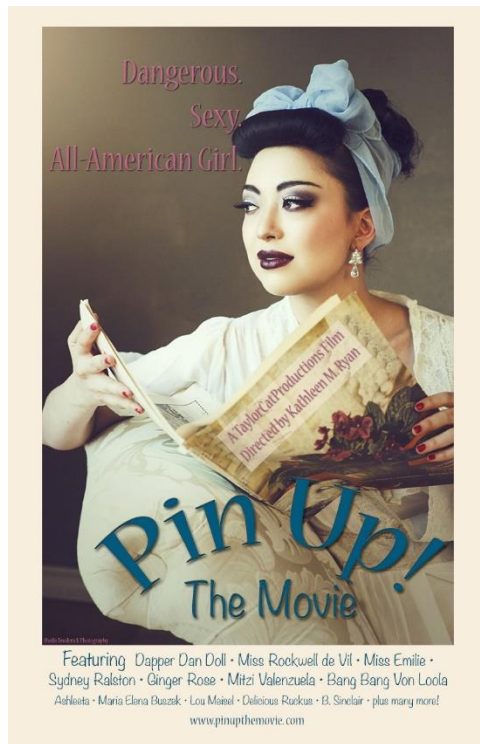


Figure 11. Movie Poster – Bing Bang, image from the film's site "Pinup! The Movie," 2020. ©

themselves and magazines, as well as theatre dance presentations remembering the burlesque's times. For Bing Bang, one of the girls, the passion is related to the self-awareness of being in control of her choices, together with the fact that she does not accept stereotypes related to gender, as she has consciously enjoyed her hobby. "I supposed the surge of burlesque, and pin up coming back is because we are able to do it for a different reason. It is for more personal and empowerment as opposed to this is what you do because you are a woman. We are doing it for fun." (Pin Up! The Movie)

Contrasting two era's Pin Up girls - the actual women depicted in the documentary, and the past generations' personas – who is the power lead of performative's medias and shows in each time? This aspect changes the whole personification of women within both contexts, and the main symbolism of Pin Ups as popular culture completely differs when men dictate the rules, or when women are in command of their bodies. The contemporary Bombshells embrace the power of their sexuality and aesthetic giving life to a beloved vintage style, while they are aware and in charge of the new productions. Even considering the current scenario being possessed by women's, Maria Elena Buszec, one of the documentary's

producers, who studied profoundly the theme, expresses her feelings in the plot. “I sometimes get a little uncomfortable in contemporary pin up culture with the cult of the male photographer who seem to be in it to make a name for themselves as a sort of a Svengali for the women on the other side of the camera.” (Pin Up! The Movie) The glamour rendered by the senior queens has a behind the scenes which subtracts the most inherent right from women. The male targeted audience and producers embodied and surmised the belief of ownership over women’s bodies, while amused themselves without recognizing the broad picture; furthermore, the boundaries of decorum, in various situations, were neglected. Considering women as sexual objects of men’s desire, the right of pleasure is violated from the roots of their femininity. The main point does not rely on subtracting men’s desire, although making them part of a context where women act and lead, instead of being pinned up for sale, like an object to deliver pleasure.

Even so, the picture of past and present scenarios is not a plane facet, nevertheless women play diacritical roles like product/chief, and use their image to render power and self-awareness within both eras, as well as have been used as propaganda throughout the advertisement history, and acting the roles to fit in the patriarchal system.

Heterosexual women in particular shared that their partners routinely dismissed their pleasure or that they had themselves absorbed the idea that it was a lesser priority. What emerged was that a lack of sexual entitlement diminished what they received and what they felt they could rightly claim in their lives. (Rowland 20)

Despite of considering the cliché nature of ‘empowerment’ as a word that shapes the actual equality movements worldwide, and that has been diminished from its post, its

symbolism, rather than representing a commonsense term, embraces women as a whole being, and the tiny lines of sexism are dangerously camouflaged behind the ordinarily labeled concept. When the boundaries of women's safeguarding are clearly assaulted, the nature of a violent act can be easily found, not easily confronted, although can be recognized.

Notwithstanding, the everyday masked narrowminded actions, which delivers an apparent safety state, can draw a latent scenario for a surrender, or a fair fight. If some real-life personas and fictional ones could cross their stories in an inspirational conversation, regarding to the strength of their inhabitant self, they could share experiences, and creative ideas of how to get away with stigmas and stereotypes, and how to possess desire and pleasure. "If you wander the desert, and it is near sundown, and you are perhaps a little lost, and certainly tired, that you are lucky, for La Loba may take a liking to you and show you something – something of the soul." (Estés 24)

Evallete Bizou is one of the contemporary pin-up girls, and, as the other women portrayed in the movie, she seems to feel the stamina through their hobby life-style, "It is this magnificent phoenix of a creature who is the epitome of beauty." Their sisterhood has roots, and they care about each other within a harmonic happy environment depicted in the plot, among men, and public. Bing Bang waits for her spot for the burlesque presentation while rehearses her music, playing her guitar she possesses an air of a captivating buoyancy, aware of her chosen roles. "Our burlesque troop was founded on the love for each other," (Pin Up! The Movie) Ginger reiterates the clan spotlight.

They were inspired by pin up girls from the 40's and 50' like Betty Grable, one of the most famous actresses and Pin Up models from 1930's to 1950's. The picture they keep as a memoir from these times is from girls who were talented and subversive.

“Rather than exercising bourgeois restraint or demonstrating modesty, Grable appears unapologetic for her frankness, confidence, and gaudiness, offering a prime example of



Figure 12 Betty Grable. Artstor library, 1940.

assertive, modern, and therefore potentially troublesome femininity, a star who is not only unashamed of her sexuality and its transgressive potential, but who actively and willingly flaunts and revels in it.” (Wright 148) Pin Up Girls are a symbol for the World War II, when they played many roles for the time campaigns and propaganda. Their posters were sent in cheap paper mass produced for the missing home soldiers.



Figure 13 Author's photography from the book *The Art Of Pin-Up*.

Mary Anne Bell could give the best advices related to War, speaking about being alone with soldiers; she knows what is the experience to be pinned up for men amusement in the short story “Sweetheart of the Song Tra Bong” by Tim O’Brien. The reader is invited to make place among young doctors during their adventure. The boys are in a camp waiting for the War casualties, far away from civilization, and one of them brings the tale of a blond girl. “I swear to God man, she’s got on culottes.” (O’Brien) The moment could be the perfect gathering among friends around a game table, or a campfire prepared to the best creepy stories. Although, the setting is the war, and the story becomes more attractive, unbelievable, and empathetic as he

brings a girl into the context. Mary Anne life experience gave her the feeling of being a wild woman, free from being squared, and after passing through difficult moments, she decided to stay in nature. From a bourgeois girl, she muted herself into a savage being like the wise girl in

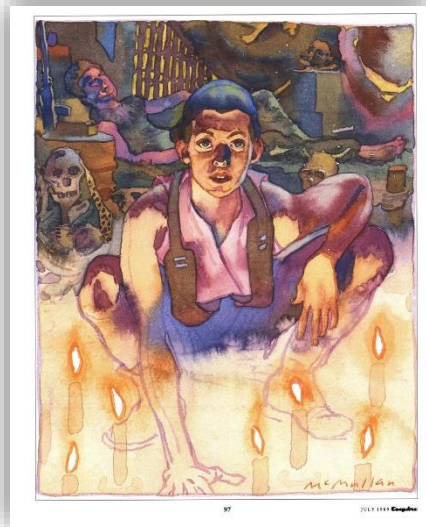


Figure 14 Illustration of the character Mary Anne Bell. *Esquire Magazine*, July, 1989.



Figure 15 Author's photography from the book *The Art of Pin-Up*.

“The Company of the Wolves,” who decided to not surrender, and became a wolf. Her looking to the men who threatened her has another connotation comparing with the original tale “Little Red Riding Hood,” and instead of fright, she desires the animal body.

Welcoming Marjane Satrapi to the women’s conversation, she has the same strength in common with the others. She was a girl who passes her childhood and youth life trying to reach freedom and to understand the paradoxes in her life related to faith, pain, love, and the traditional rules of her country, Iran. The narrative is a self-portrait in which Satrapi gives voice to her real-life character through two comic books. Witty and courageous, she illustrates her life chapters with strong images, and self-awareness like when she tried to “urinate like a man” while reading “Simone de Beauvoir”. “To educate myself, I had to understand everything, starting with myself, me, Marji, the woman. So, I threw myself into reading my mother’s favorite book.” (Satrapi 21)

After the experience she decided that being seated should be easier, and as an Iranian woman she needed to learn how to become an emancipated woman. (Satrapi 21)



Figure 16 Author's photography from the book *Persepolis 2*, 2020.



Figure 17 Marjane Satrapi in Germany. Artstor Library, 2004

Those women have in common a vigorous essence and self-love which is fundamental to reach self-awareness. Their words have power, and they do not accept the boundaries and preconceptions of society, and when in trouble, they can call the wolf of women's soul to be in control. "I have followed my own path instead of the one I had been taught was 'right' all my life." (Jennings 495) Coming from various generations and countries, and from diverse path, the conversation between them is fluid as each one understands the significance of being a woman along with the stones and thorns, still - they do not renounce of their entire beings. Clarissa Pinkola Estés in her book "Women Who Run With the Wolves," scrutinizes wild women's

archetypes. The Women Wolf “is the wild essence that inhabits nature, and the force personified by La Loba...She has survived generation after generation, and is old beyond time. She is an archivist of feminine intention.” (Estés 25)

While the myths and symbolism of La Loba give support to women’s empowerment, reiterating the leadership strength within the diacritical logic, other signs reinforce the idea of women as a product to achieve advertisement’s goals, giving light to the merchandise background of women’s roles. The archetypes and symbols of women through the history of Pin Up propagandas - including suffragists posters and campaigns during the war - have distinct connotations depending on the intended audience. Women also had their arena as an audience, bringing the call for duty campaigns, during World War II, showed by posters calling both genders to action. Besides of the temporary need related to women and their skills, attaching their image to other contents than body and sexuality, the depiction of female has been, mostly about sexuality. The most crucial feature to emphasize the context is the male audience and its necessities as a marketing end.

At the paradigmatic level, one can wonder why haven't the man and the woman been portrayed in a more balanced position or why doesn't the woman hold the position of power, of a subject, not of an accessory or, at a syntagmatic level, why hasn't the man been portrayed near another social status indicator, such as a car or the luxurious surround of a fancy house. (Dămean 169)

Bringing the Pin Ups as a subject matter that are part of popular culture as well as of the art world, the last one seems to not consider the glamour girl’s paintings as fine art within an implied discuss. As an example, the art book “The Art of Feminism,” portrays the advertisement era that depicted women alongside Art History showing pin ups pictures and paintings during

diverse eras - the Suffragist pin ups, and posters of women who were called for warship during World War II, although the publication does not explore the enormous amount of illustration of the sexy Pin Up Girls as an object of desire. Analyzing the subject matter ‘women’ in the hardcover, it seems to not also consider the women painters who produced self portraits of her pin up personas. Considering the propaganda content by comparing the warship pin ups and the pin up produced by male painters, in both cases women are not in control of the subject matter. The call from the government is temporary, and the emphasis in women skills, not subtracting the historical relevance of the features, is to give support to men during the war.



Figure 18 World War II poster. Artstor library,

Figure 19 Author's picture from the book *The Art of Feminism*,

Figure 20 Author's picture from the book *The Art of Pin-Up*, 2020.

Figure 21 Author's picture from the book *The Art of Pin-Up*, 2020.

One is an appellative advertisement that fulfills men's war needs, once they could not stand alone in some areas. The other give the soldiers the company of girls while far from home. "Many Feminist artists illuminated an imperative to end sexism and oppression with works that went against the traditional ideas of women as merely beautiful objects to be visually enjoyed." (The Art) The misogynist content is depicted over the two kind of posters, and the ones that was painted by women, not for war, but portraying sexy figure, representing the main concept of pin-up girls are leaved aside. The association between the propagandas shows an overdetermined significance, considering the complex historical paradigmatical content among different eras,



specificities of the feminist movement, and the social gender issues. "...feminist constructs of female sexuality – in a desire to depart from sexist constructs – have resulted in a visual language pointedly hostile to both sexual desire and women for whom a radical denial of traditional feminine signifiers is itself oppressive." (Buszec 7) The contemporary Pin Up Girls, in order to advertise themselves cannot rely only in the old media to sell their products. They fit with the new era of social media propaganda, and through personal accounts they can promote Pin Up style as well as their own images. The actual price is the private information, regarding to the mass-produced platforms, and the silent nature of identities as a "commodity for sale" (Maasik 460)

Equality just can be reached when women figure their desire and pleasure out. The profound knowledge about their selves, their whole bodies, their souls; it is a matter of attending a fundamental level of self-esteem. The awakening of senses leads to a whole being who possesses the basic self to after, explore the world. "Female sex desire was long considered to be a danger to men, and so...was best ignored." (Taylor 169) Discovering desire and pleasure is a way to women to fight without ignorance, and educate the genders according to their wills.

Within us is the old one who collect bones

Within us there are the soul bones of this wild self

Within us is the potential to be fleshed out again as the creature we once were

Within us are the bones to change ourselves and our world

Within us is the breath and our truths and our longings

Together they are the song, the creation hymn we have been yearning to sing. (Estés 31)

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