

French-Cut Feminism

BY COITO

Whenever I walk into Macy's, my eyes are assaulted by images of orange women with toned stomachs, breasts spilling out of their padded bras, and waxed labias (nobody has pubic hair that allows underwear to fall that smoothly over their crotches). Even worse are the women I see, who, despite the brilliance of their curvaceous bodies, clutch triangles of lace and silk in their hands and seem to look to the pubeless orange ladies for advice. When did we start to depend on the image of adolescent representations of femininity for fashion counsel? We need to set our sights on older women.

Every morning, I do myself a favor and put on a fresh pair of cotton blend, French-cut granny panties. There's something about the way the elastic waistband sits above my brown stretch marks. The way my tush looks in khakis, accentuated by the panty lines. The way I can count on some line of lace not being up my crack when I walk. All my lady things are in their place, cozied up together next to the cotton, not shoved up inside of me like stuffing in a Thanksgiving turkey. I am not a fucking bird. I am a woman.

Not only are most women overly obsessed with a beauty standard that prioritizes sex appeal over comfort, reveres hairless pussies, and resembles the average twelve-year-old—many men are, too. While standing in line for lunch one day, I heard one man behind me say, "I hate it when girls wear granny panties with their yoga pants. Wear a thong, we don't want to see those panty lines." Patriarchy abounds. Sex appeal is not one-size-fits-all. We're not dressing for you. We're dressing for ourselves, for our ability to express what's in every groove of our intricately beautiful brains, for our vaginas. Vagina is power. That gorgeous gathered collection of feminine folds cannot be handed over to the Man. It needs to menstruate all over the Man and wear whatever it wants.

Something awakens inside of me when I let my Portuguese pubes grow into their natural chaos and allow my tummy room to breathe with the help of my granny panties. I appreciate knowing that everything is able to be as it is. When I pull my underwear over my unshaved legs and unapolo-

getically well-acquainted thighs, I send a symbolic middle finger out to the universe and take care of myself the best way I know how.

Despite all this, being in the Macy's lingerie section is still a trying task for the radical feminist within me. But instead of focusing on the hands clutching triangles of lace and silk and the orange women, I swing my hips over to Jockey's underwear display, throwing my curves in the faces of the airbrushed advertisements. I get my new box of French-cuts.