Feral Feminisms, an independent, inter-media, peer reviewed, open access online journal, invites submissions from artists, activists, and scholars for a special issue entitled, Critical Interventions in Rape Culture, guest edited by Nisha Eswaran, Emma McKenna, and Sarah Wahab. Submitted contributions may include full-length theoretical essays (about 5000 – 7000 words), shorter creative pieces, cultural commentaries, personal narratives or auto-ethnographies (about 500 – 2500 words), poetry, photo-essays, short films/video (uploaded to Vimeo), visual and sound art (jpeg Max 1MB), or a combination of these. Please direct inquiries and submissions to all three of the guest editors: Nisha Eswaran (eswaranb[at]mcmaster[dot]ca), Emma McKenna (mckennej[at]mcmaster[dot]ca), and Sarah Wahab (wahabsa[at]mcmaster[dot]ca) and to Feral Feminisms (feralfeminisms[at]gmail[dot]com).

This past year has marked a historical moment with the phrase “rape culture” featured in headlines across Canada, particularly as Jian Ghomeshi’s high profile sexual assault case received the verdict of acquittal. While some feminist criticisms of this verdict have been made public, and the affective dismay has been felt throughout our diverse communities, there remains an absence of a collective critical feminist intervention into not only the handling of the Ghomeshi trial, but also the concept of rape culture writ large. This issue of Feral Feminisms, “Critical Interventions in Rape Culture,” seeks to explore how feminists can critically intervene in rape culture, and the uneven disciplining of sexual assault by institutional, criminal, judicial, and carceral systems.

In 1988, Canadian feminist scholar Susan Sherwin asserted that “patriarchy, or male domination, is the social norm throughout our culture” and that “such dominance has been further reinforced through the various means by which men control women’s sexuality” (137). Sherwin argues that heterosexual rape is one of these primary “mechanisms to reinforce such dominance,” not unlike the international arms race “where small, ‘weaker’ nations find themselves forced to align themselves with a superpower in the hope of achieving protection from the aggression of other nations” (137). Again in 1988, rape culture as a concept emerges in the writing of American scholar Susan Griffin, who argues that: “Our society is a rape culture because it fosters and encourages rape by teaching males and females that it is natural and normal for sexual relations to involve aggressive behavior on the part of males. To end rape, people must be able to envision a relationship between the sexes that involves sharing, warmth, and equality, and to bring about a social system in which these values are fostered” (52). Nora Samaran’s 2016 article, “The Opposite of Rape Culture is Nurturance Culture,” similarly argues that underlying a culture of rape is men’s inability to express a need for intimacy and connection with others.

The parallels between Samaran’s recent concerns and those of Sherwin and Griffin thirty years prior suggest that we are at a curious impasse in 2016, where the feminist (or post-feminist?) concept of rape culture has come to stand in for and obscure a whole host of relations of dominance relating to sexual assault. Yasmin Nair (2014) suggests that conceiving of sexual violence through the framework of a rape culture intersects with and arises from a “culture of confession” that reproduces survivors of rape as neoliberal subjects. This insight begs the question, then, of how does the concept of a rape culture rely on neoliberal notions of subjectivity, self-hood, and traumatic injury that place limitations on how critiques of rape culture might function as resistive tools? How might the increased emphasis on “consent”—positioned as a solution to rape via state, institutional, and media discourses—align itself with the status quo and with gendered, racial, classed, and sexual power relations under neoliberal capitalism? How does the concept of rape culture find belonging within dominant notions of femininity, wealth, and
white, and how does this affect the experiences of and legibility of sexual violence that occurs elsewhere and at the intersections of marginality, particularly amongst people who are poor, racialized as non-white, Indigenous, queer, trans, and/or engaged in sex work?

With these questions in mind, this issue of *Feral Feminisms* seeks critical interventions into rape culture that go beyond the naming of rape culture, and instead interrogate its dynamics, propose alternative forms of resistance, and develop theory that breaks down and specifies its discursive, material, and representative power. Topics and questions may include, but are not limited to historical and contemporary mediations on rape culture in relation to:

- activism
- challenges to the gender binary
- masculinity
- queerness
- transness
- dis/ability
- Indigeneity
- Blackness
- race and racialization
- whiteness
- diaspora and citizenship
- capitalism and neoliberalism
- colonialism and post-colonials
- Marxism
- residential schools
- the child welfare system
- poverty
- sex work
- wage work, unions
- campuses
- prisons, Truth and Reconciliation Councils, alternative forms of justice
- intimacy, friendship, family, community
- media, social media, and celebrity
- rape crisis centers, the rape crisis movement, take back the night

We invite contributions that critically interrogate, through a contemporary or historical lens, the relation of rape culture to the questions laid out above, as well as other themes. Please send submissions along with a 60-word author biography, and a 100-word abstract to all three of the guest editors: Nisha Eswaran (eswaranb@mcmaster.ca), Emma McKenna (mckennej@mcmaster.ca), and Sarah Wahab (wahabsa@mcmaster.ca) and to *Feral Feminisms* (feralfeminisms[at]gmail[dot]com) by 1 April 2017. For detailed submission guidelines please visit: http://www.feralfeminisms.com/submission-guidelines/