



DARTMOOR'S 'GRITTY WOMEN'

Sue Porter, 2018

Lord Tennyson, Poet Laureate during much of Queen Victoria's reign, wrote giving Boadicea a voice:

They that scorn the tribes and call us Britain's
barbarous populaces,
Did they hear me, would they listen, did they pity
me supplicating?
Shall I heed them in their anguish?
Shall I brook to be supplicated?
(Poemhunter 2018)

Boadicea was clearly a 'Gritty Woman'. But what about today -- what constitutes a 'Gritty Woman'?

About Gritty women, Getty observes: "There's a 'new woman' on the scene, and she's smashing conventions and tearing down walls. She's tough, She's tenacious and She's laser focussed and unafraid to get her hands dirty". In 2013 one of Getty's trends was 'Female Rising', in 2014, it was Genderblend trend and with a splattering of Messthetics from 2016. However, Getty suggests that the Gritty Woman is out there on her own and she's a 'badass', Getty goes further to say about Gritty Women, "She's not to be crossed, overlooked or underestimated, She's a fighter a feminist, a phenomenon and She's the Gritty Woman, more concerned with what she can do than how she should look" (Getty, 2017 p41).

What does all of this mean? From the first and second wave Suffragettes to burning bras, women have fought for and conquered equality. Is this really true though? No, it is not! We have seen senior MP's and famous people resign over sex allegations and sexual harrasment such as Michael Fallon, Defence Secretary, Damian Green, MP for Ashford Kent who admitted asking his former

assistant to but sex toys as well as literally dozens of accusations of harrasment and assault against film mogul Harvey Weinstein (Siddique 2017).

Further injustices include ASDA's equal pay battle (Cox 2017). So, from 2013's 'Female Rising' to 2017's 'Gritty Women', women have been championed by Getty in their imagery. Although the imagery in 2017's. 'Creative in Focus' shows Gritty women playing sport and in industrial settings, which do indeed amplify the possibility of the 'Gritty Woman', the images certainly do not show the other side of the 'Gritty Woman' such as child birth, motherhood and the traditional side of family life.

The creation of Getty's Gritty Woman was



Sue Anderson, 2018

partnered by Sheryl Sandberg, founder of Leanin.Org and COO of Facebook. Sandberg's organisation desires to support women in three main ways: community, education, and circles, or small, coordinated peer groups that meet to share their experiences and learn together.

The organisation views itself as the next step in an effort to change “Together women can do more, go further, and change the world..” (Leanin.org, 2018).



Alli Holland, 2018

However, Sandberg’s opinions and philosophies have been challenged by the journalist Sarah Leonard who told *The New Yorker’s* Vauhini Vara, Sandberg only writes for the ‘elite of women’ with plentiful experience and fancy degrees. Further criticism comes from Elizabeth Bruenig of *The New Republic* who remarks: “Sandberg has spoken to individual women and this approach is ‘wrong-headed’ and is hurting the lower wage earning women. To individualise female empowerment, both in the workplace and at home, rather than a social action has driven women to funnel resources into advanced education and leadership training rather than into the machinery of politics and protest (Bruenig, 2015). Sandberg’s well-intentioned philosophies seem to have missed the mark for all classes of women. Whereas the elite women within the echelons of big business no doubt benefit from her doctrine, the working-class women certainly does not and is in some ways still the underdog in a still deeply gendered society.

Notwithstanding this, the strategy of flooding the market with imagery so the intended audience will start to believe is very much alive and is being used well. Getty has used their imagery imaginatively within the 2017 trend ‘Gritty Woman’.

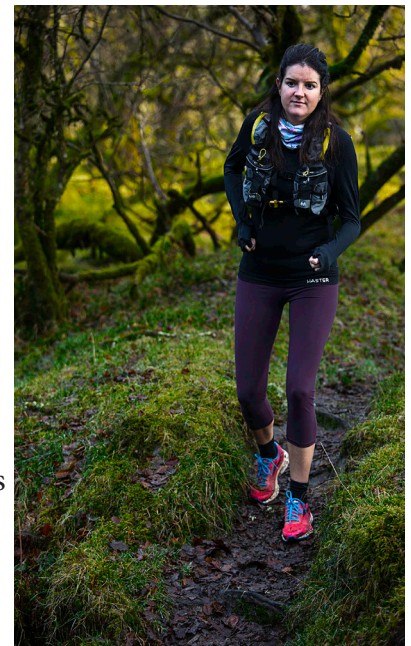
It seems that Sandberg has received a great deal of criticism for her organisation and philosophies. However it seems fair to argue that perspectives on female empowerment and emancipation have certainly improved or/and enhanced some women. (Bruenig, 2015).

Nevertheless, this does not seem enough for her critics. It has also been suggested that her efforts

mostly concerned already resourced , successful and well-heeled women of industry and encouraged others to get into the higher echelons of business. Some of the clichés Getty have come up with such as, “She’s laser focussed and unafraid of getting her hands dirty and She’s not to be crossed, overlooked or underestimated,” have connotations of the stereotypical business executive. Conversely, there are alternative cliché lines such as “She’s a fighter, a feminist’ -- a phenomenon” that suggests quite a different point of view.

These photographs of local strong, adventurous and hard- working Dartmoor women clearly validates their doggedness and determination. They are not to be ‘crossed’, ‘overlooked’ nor ‘underestimated’

Furthermore, the images Getty have released about Gritty Women certainly do not tell the story of the elite of women. Quite the opposite. Nor, does it discriminate the young woman from the older woman. The stories tell of strength, doggedness, determination and, yes grit, but perhaps in a way that falsely creates a notion of a ‘homogenous’ womanhood.



Lorna Mullvihill, 2018

“Men and women are made for each other, but their mutual dependence is not equal. We could survive without them better than they could without us. They are dependent on our feelings, on the price we put on their merits, on the value we set on their attractions and on their virtues.

Thus, women’s entire education should be planned in relation to men. To please men, to be useful to them, to win their love and respect, to raise them as children, to care for them as adults, counsel and console them, make their lives sweet and pleasant”.

(Alice-Watkins et al., 1992, p11).

Regretfully, Rousseau's style of pure male chauvinism and belligerence is still an underlying fact today. Thankfully the fight continues... Equally, there are female chauvinists such as Susan Brownmiller who in 1976 noted: "I would like to be in a close association with a man who's work I respect. I am not willing to compromise other women are their needs may be greater". Brownmiller was a drop-out from Cornell university and went to Manhattan to become an actress. That didn't work either she then became an activist in the women's movement which proved to be a much better outlet for her self-described "theatrical bravura" and "sense of radical drama". (Levy 2005).

Undoubtedly, the two previous paragraphs appear contradictory and provoke uproar on both sides of the fence. Nonetheless, the ideals are years apart; there still remains a male dominance in the world of business and in the Western World as highlighted above. Barbara Stocking of *The Financial Times* writes: "There is much concern about why women are not making it to the top of organisations and professions.

Equal numbers of men and women are recruited and a reasonable percentage are there at mid to senior levels, but there are few at the top." (Stocking, 2016).

Although this short passage from *The Financial Times* is discussing women in senior roles and not the lower wage-earning woman, the comments made by Barbara Stocking identifies that there remains a gulf between men and women. How the gulf is finally eliminated is so yet unclear. Notwithstanding the comments drawn from a number of articles in popular publications and books the emergence of the 'Gritty Woman' is a real clearly and socially relevant phenomenon. She has triumphed from oppression of the male dominant environment. She has demonstrated tenacity, fortitude, resoluteness, strength and courageousness to get where she currently finds herself. But there is still much to be done.



Ruth Davies, 2018



Debbie Walsh, 2018

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