

Seattle University

ScholarWorks @ SeattleU

The Spectator Online

Newspapers

1-17-2024

2024-01-17 Unveiling the Sexism Behind “Resting Bitch Face”

Lia Collis

Seattle University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.seattleu.edu/spectator-online>

Recommended Citation

Collis, Lia, "2024-01-17 Unveiling the Sexism Behind “Resting Bitch Face”" (2024). *The Spectator Online*. 1155.

<https://scholarworks.seattleu.edu/spectator-online/1155>

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Newspapers at ScholarWorks @ SeattleU. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Spectator Online by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks @ SeattleU.



The Spectator • January 17, 2024 • <https://seattlespectator.com/2024/01/17/unveiling-the-sexism-behind-resting-bitch-face/>

Unveiling the Sexism Behind “Resting Bitch Face”

Lia Collis

Dear Seattle University undergraduates and graduates,

Throughout your life, you have probably heard the term “resting bitch face” or “RBF” pop up during a conversation. When somebody has an RBF, this means that the natural resting state of someone’s facial expression is allegedly irritated or displeased. This phrase is generally coined to and from women, but men occasionally use the phrase as well. I myself said this phrase to girls years ago. I have also been on the receiving end, being told on multiple occasions that I have an RBF. But why does it matter if my face at baseline isn’t naturally gleeful or conventionally appeasing? Why am I immediately called a bitch for looking slightly disinterested? Who should I be smiling for? This common phrase we use is blatantly sexist. Sadly, we seem to be unaware of the underlying misogynistic message that is embedded deep within this common expression.

A common theme within the language of catcalling is around a woman’s smile. We hear catcalls saying, “Give me a smile” or “Who ruined her day?” The male gaze enforces the concept that women 24/7 have to look pleasant and polite. But why is this? Because in the man-dominated world we live in, men believe they own the rights of women’s bodies, and these bodies are made only for the enjoyment of other men. There is a level of physical and mental standards that are created by men and forced upon women from birth. From your high-school dress code, to your father telling you to change your shirt because their 50-year-old male coworker is coming over, to thinking that your legs look dirty when you haven’t shaved them, these patriarchal standards ridicule women for existing in a manner that displeases men. The RBF is yet another standard created by men that has been silently normalized in our day-to-day vocabulary. When you say that a woman has an RBF, you are attacking her for existing in her own body without any regard for what men think (god forbid).

When it comes down to it, language matters. The words we consciously or unconsciously say, matter. We wouldn’t describe a man as a bitch for having a disinterested face, they would be called authoritative. Yet, in the same scenario, women are described as a bitch, bossy, or dramatic. The English language is filled with misogynistic phrases, and from a lack of critical thinking, phrases like RBF contaminate the human population with normalized misogyny that affects the day-to-day lives of every single woman on this planet.

The patriarchy has created a world where both men and women ridicule women for almost everything that we do. Toxic masculinity has resulted in men hating women, and from our internalized misogyny, we commonly see the sad phenomenon of women also hating women. When a woman goes about her day, indifferent to male-created societal standards, we need to quit the RBF commentary and start applauding our strong, intelligent, and beautiful soldiers for fighting this long, but necessary battle.

Stay woke

Lia