

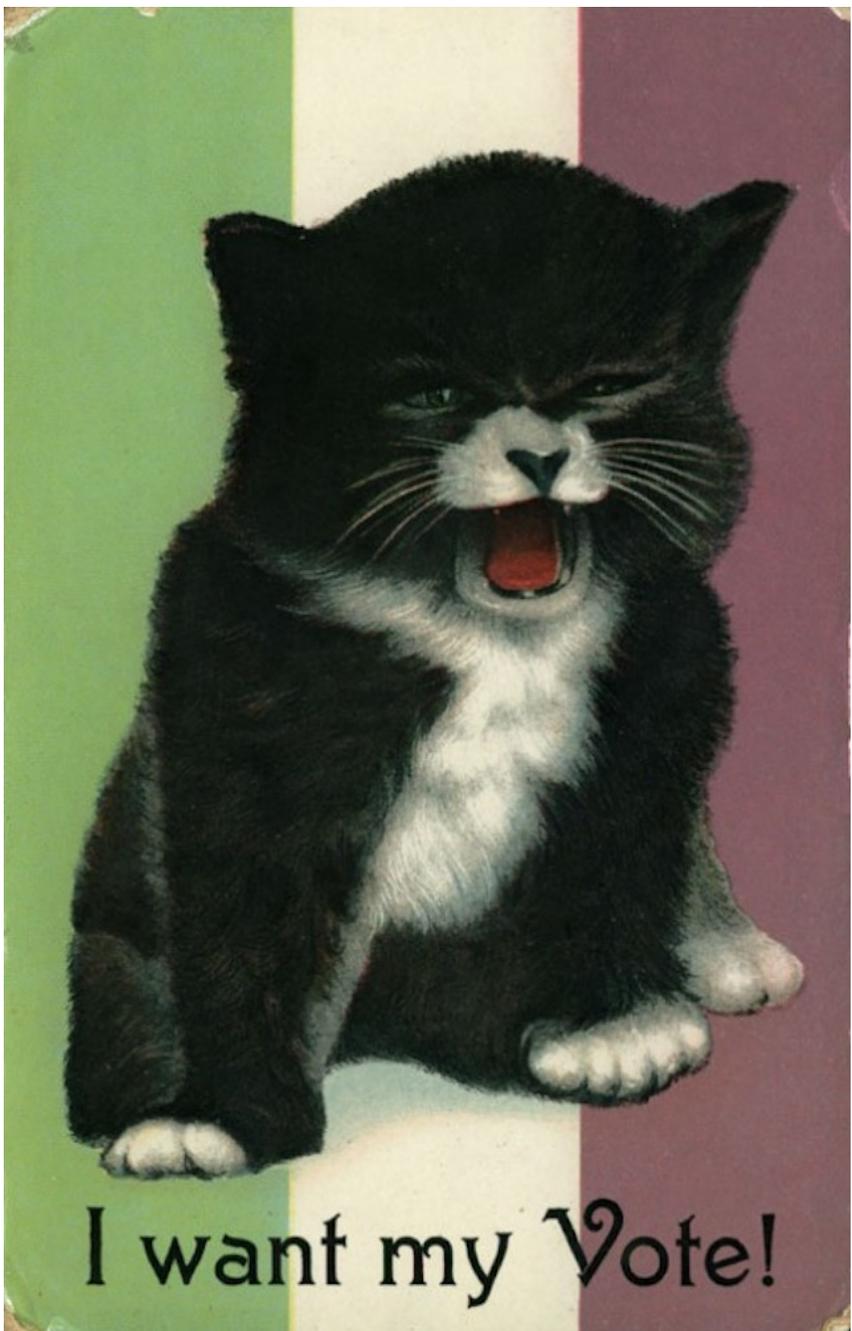


Suffragette Cats Are the Original Cat Ladies (<http://jezebel.com/suffragette-cats-are-the-original-cat-ladies-1478240567>)



Cats and dogs are gendered (<http://thesocietypages.org/socimages/2011/04/22/dogs-are-blue-cats-are-pink-people-are-silly/>) in contemporary American culture, such that dogs are thought to be the proper pet for men and cats for women (especially lesbians (<http://thesocietypages.org/socimages/2011/08/12/the-ubiquity-of-gender-rules-or-do-lesbians-have-to-love-cats/>)). This, it turns out, is an old stereotype. In fact, cats were a common symbol in suffragette imagery. Cats represented the domestic sphere, and anti-suffrage postcards often used them to reference female activists. The intent was to portray suffragettes as silly, infantile, incompetent, and ill-suited to political engagement.





Cats were also used in anti-suffrage cartoons and postcards that featured the bumbling, emasculated father cruelly left behind to cover his wife's shirked duties as she so ungracefully abandons the home for the political sphere. Oftentimes, unhappy cats were portrayed in these scenes as symbols of a threatened traditional home in need of woman's care and attention.



The Suffragette not at home.



While opposition to the female vote was strong, public sentiment warmed to the suffragettes as police brutality began to push women into a more favorable, if victimized, light.

7

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1477914821)

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Zach Braff Is Wrong About Moist Things (<http://jezebel.com/zach-braff-is-wrong-about-moist-things-1478003044>)

Waitress Who Faked Anti-Gay Receipt Also Lied About Giving to Charity (<http://jezebel.com/waitress-who-faked-anti-gay-receipt-also-lied-about-giv-1478119558>)

Selfie Loathing: What Celebrities Did on



As suffragettes increasingly found themselves jailed, many resisted unfair or inhumane imprisonment with hunger strikes. In response, jailers would often force-feed female prisoners with steel devices to pry open their mouths and long hoses inserted into their noses and down their throats. This caused severe damage to the women's faces, mouths, lungs, and stomachs, sometimes causing illness and death.

Not wanting to create a group of martyrs for the suffragist cause, the British government responded by enacting the Prisoner's Act of 1913 which temporarily freed prisoners to recuperate (or die) at home and then rearrested them when they were well. The intention was to free the government from responsibility of injury and death from force feeding prisoners.

This act became popularly known as the "Cat and Mouse Act," as the government was seen as toying with their female prey as a cat would a mouse. Suddenly, the cat takes on a decidedly more masculine, "tom cat" persona. The cat now represented the violent realities of women's struggle for political rights in the male public sphere.

Instagram This Week (<http://jezebel.com/selfie-loathing-what-celebrities-did-on-instagram-this-1477220919>)

One Woman's Dangerous War Against the Most Hated Man on the Internet (<http://jezebel.com/one-womans-dangerous-war-against-the-most-hated-man-on-1469240835>)

Christy Turlington's Calvin Klein Ads Don't Exactly Represent Grown Women (<http://jezebel.com/christy-turlingtons-calvin-klein-ads-dont-exactly-rep-1478137296>)

Nigella Lawson Is Flawless (<http://jezebel.com/nigella-lawson-is-flawless-1478215246>)



The longevity of the stereotype of cats as feminine and domestic, along with the interesting way that the social constructions flipped, is a great example of how cultural associations are used to create meaning and facilitate or resist social change.

Cross-posted at Human-Animal Studies Images (<http://hasimages.blogspot.com/2013/05/cat-imagery-in-suffragette-movement.html>).

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This post originally appeared on Sociological Images

(<http://thesocietypages.org/socimages/2013/12/04/the-feminization-of-the-cat-in-anti-suffrage-propaganda/>). Republished with permission.

Like 145 Discuss (/posts/1478240567/reply)

13 participants



ToHelenBackAgain (<http://to...>)

1 participant



Corggirl (<http://corggirl.kinja...>)



Fascinating; I had no idea.

Weirdly, I find some of the purportedly anti-suffragette images extremely appealing. The black-and-white kitten who wants her vote is slaying me!

And the "father left behind" examples here, to my modern eye, don't make the women look bad at all. Just the men. I find it interesting that anti-suffragists considered men so helpless and incompetent.

Today 7:29pm (http://jezebel.com/fascinating-i-had-no-idea-weirdly-i-find-some-of-the-purportedly-anti-suffragette-images-extremely-appealing-the-black-and-white-kitten-who-wants-her-vote-is-slaying-me-1478326930)

itcamefromthefuture (http://i...)

1 ★ (/posts/1478329951/reply) ▶

Dude. It's not that hard.

Today 7:35pm (http://jezebel.com/dude-its-not-that-hard-1478329951)

RegularPartridgeInAPearTr...

3 ★ (/posts/1478339187/reply) ▶

"Don't leave me here with my own children! What kind of a monster are you?"

Today 7:51pm (http://jezebel.com/dont-leave-me-here-with-my-own-children-what-kind-of-a-monster-are-you-1478339187) tortore (http://tortore.kinja....)

ToHelenBackAgain and 9 others (/posts/1478354281/reply) ▶

These ads are so stupid. Only a truly delusional person thinks dogs are better suited to politics than cats. Cats have the charisma and cool mindset displayed by the best politicians. Dogs are far too inconsistent to run a success campaign, let alone do well in office.

Today 8:23pm (http://jezebel.com/these-ads-are-so-stupid-only-a-truly-delusional-person-thinks-dogs-are-better-suited-to-politics-than-cats-cats-have-the-charisma-and-cool-mindset-displayed-by-the-best-politicians-dogs-are-far-too-inconsistent-to-run-a-success-campaign-let-alone-do-well-in-office-1478354281)

crocuta (http://crocuta.kinja....)

4 ★ (/posts/1478362631/reply) ▶

Cats have the cold amorality hidden under a genial demeanor that would serve them well in politics. Dogs would go into office with good intentions, but would be all too susceptible to biscuit bribes and would probably get caught on tape humping an intern's leg in their first term anyway.

Today 8:41pm (http://jezebel.com/cats-have-the-cold-amorality-hidden-under-a-genial-demeanor-that-would-serve-them-well-in-politics-dogs-would-go-into-office-with-good-intentions-but-would-be-all-too-susceptible-to-biscuit-bribes-and-would-probably-get-caught-on-tape-humping-an-interns-leg-in-their-first-term-anyway-1478362631)

ToHelenBackAgain (http://to...)

★ (/posts/1478377600/reply) ▶

Also, dogs are so eager to please! They'd be forever pandering without even meaning to do it.

Today 9:13pm (http://jezebel.com/also-dogs-are-so-eager-to-please-theyd-be-forever-pandering-without-even-meaning-to-do-it-1478377600) SayItAgain (http://sayitagain...)

charlotte_good and 0 others (/posts/1478355081/reply) ▶

First, our feminist foremothers were properly known as SUFFRAGISTS and the term deployed throughout this post was the 100 year ago equivalent of "women's libber" in the 70's. Also cats have always (for approx

People visiting my house are constantly confused because my dog is female and my cat is male. They cannot wrap their minds around it and always flip their sexes. It's funny.

59 participants (http://jezebel.com/people-visiting-my-house-are-constantl-1478418374)

FaustianSlip (http://faustians...)

2 ★ (/posts/1478340684/reply) ▶

Wait... what? Dogs are only for men now? I'm currently sitting next to my bed, merrily chewing on a bone, oblivious to the fact that we're upsetting the *natural order*.

Also, Suffragette Cat is totally going to be the name of my band someday.

Today 7:54pm (http://jezebel.com/wait-what-dogs-are-only-for-men-now-i-t-1478340684)

Gemmabeta (http://gemmab...)

4 ★ (/posts/1478350037/reply) ▶

I'll take *Elizabeth Catty Staunton*.

Today 8:14pm (http://jezebel.com/ill-take-elizabeth-catty-staunton-1478350037) charlotte_good (http://charlo...)

charlotte_good (http://charlo...)

3 participants 1 ★ (/posts/1478406820/reply) ▶

Then your band name should be Laetitia

loge (http://loge.kinja.com) ▶

Today 10:18pm (http://jezebel.com/then-your-band-name-will-be-laetitia-m-1478406820) 8 ★ (/posts/1478322659/reply) ▶

Off topic but still: Because I have a boy cat I think all cats are boys. But my boy cat also had his penis removed and basically given a vagina, due to some weird urinary infection so he's more of a post-op transgender cat now.

Today 7:21pm (http://jezebel.com/off-topic-but-still-because-i-have-a-boy-c-1478322659)

GingerIsAConstruct (http://gi...)

3 ★ (/posts/1478342635/reply) ▶

Awww, little guy! My cat is a cis-gendered female, so there! No less an authority than my friend's grandmother insists that all cats are girls and all dogs are boys and refuses to recognize that he has a female dog. Amazing rule to live by.

Today 7:58pm (http://jezebel.com/awww-little-guy-my-cat-is-a-cis-genderec-1478342635)

loge (http://loge.kinja.com) ▶

4 ★ (/posts/1478343074/reply) ▶

How do you know she doesn't identify as a

Shuttingupandlistening (http://...)

4 ★ (/posts/1478352803/reply) ▶

Morella_xx I am a man and you can pry my cat off of my cold dead belly, where he likes to sleep.

Today 8:19pm (http://jezebel.com/i-am-a-man-and-you-can-pry-my-cat-off-o-1478352803)

9000 yrs) been associated with protecting the grain stores so the hearth/home association is ancient. THE KITTEHS MUST NEVER BE APPROPRIATED BY THE MENZ. Additionally, I have gotten into some really good wine tonite. That is all.

Today 8:25pm (<http://jezebel.com/first-our-feminist-foremothers-were-properly-known-as-suffragette-kitty-1478381317>)

 **tangerinetrees** (<http://tanger...>)

★ (/posts/1478430778/reply) ▶

Suffragette and suffragist were both used at the time by women in the movement, but they were in some ways different movements. Suffragette was coined by a man and embraced by the women of that movement as a sort of reclamation and assertion that they wouldn't be cowed. (They published a newspaper called "The Suffragette"). I believe US women more commonly identified as suffragists, but there was a self-identified suffragette movement in the UK, which is what this article is about.

28 minutes ago (<http://jezebel.com/suffragette-and-suffragist-were-both-used-at-the-time-b-1478430778>)

 **SayItAgain** (<http://sayitagain...>)

★ (/posts/1478432546/reply) ▶

Duly noted.

24 minutes ago (<http://jezebel.com/duly-noted-1478432546>)

1 participant

 **Lambsey** (<http://lambsey.kin...>)

1 ★ (/posts/1478381317/reply) ▶

Suffragette Kitty!!

Today 9:21pm (<http://jezebel.com/suffragette-kitty-1478381317>)

 **ToHelenBackAgain** (<http://to...>)

1 ★ (/posts/1478416327/reply) ▶

Oooo, NICE deployment of Bowie!

Today 10:40pm (<http://jezebel.com/oooo-nice-deployment-of-bowie-1478416327>)

 **GingerIsAConstruct** (<http://gi...>)

1 ★ (/posts/1478324084/reply) ▶

Of course cats don't care if they get the vote, they're total Nihilists.

The bird in the hat of the first cat is a nice touch. Fantastic post. I'll have to use this if I teach social movement history, American women's history or history of feminism courses again in the future.

Today 7:24pm (<http://jezebel.com/of-course-cats-dont-care-if-they-get-the-1478324084>)

 **merricart** (<http://merricart.ki...>)

1 ★ (/posts/1478405821/reply) ▶

The man in that cartoon didn't know how to pour water into a pot. I think voting might be too much for his delicate brain.

Today 10:16pm (<http://jezebel.com/the-man-in-that-cartoon-didnt-know-how-to-pour-water-into-a-pot-1478405821>)

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