

Women's Issues

IS FEMINIST ACTIVISM NECESSARY?

No.

Annabelle Canestraight

Guest Writer

Individualism and feminism are two terms that have been habitually crossed and misused, and it is time to set the two straight again.

For a long time now, the term feminism has encompassed the need for equal pay and job opportunities. It was a movement that brought women from not being recognized citizens to being regarded by many men as a different kind of citizen.

Now, many women want measures to be taken to make them not only equal, but also the same as men. This is all well and fine, except most women are unable to abandon fundamental differences that separate them from men.

This is why we need to look at the human rights movement as more of an individual movement than one that immediately ties in with feminism. That is, unless women want to give up their role of birthing children.

Though they want to earn wages equal to those of men, women often pursue career options that are not scientifically progressive for our globe. Most tech schools including Georgia Tech (65:35 male to female ratio) and our own Michigan Tech are highly male-dominant, while "liberal arts" schools such as Sarah Lawrence and Oberlin usually have around 60-65 % female students.

It's possible that women shy away from a path toward a career in technology due to fear of discrimination or glass ceilings. However, the reality is, despite the fear of discrimination or lack of natural interest, women would be welcomed into the schools that design the technology that shapes our world, sometimes just because some companies want to hire women to claim higher gender diversity.

Once a woman has created something fantastic and useful to our globe, it doesn't matter if someone says, "It's a great achievement...for a woman," because science and technology is often very concrete,

so no one cares why it's impressive.

By no means do I intend to say women are useless unless they pursue STEM, but if they want to grab the attention, respect, and paychecks of their male counterparts, they may want to consider joining the race.

The second consideration women should make when vying for equal pay is the nature of the way they live their lives.

In her piece, Adanya mentioned that women are not being paid while on maternity leave, and even being fired for it. While this may seem heartbreaking, and a very cruel thing to do to a young mother trying to fulfill her biological and familial potential, we often do not think about it from the perspective of the employer.

Many employers, just like the young mother, have financial constraints and the motivation to earn a profit. Unfortunately, these often do not involve paying an employee who does not actually do work for the company/business. Even if a mother is to work part-time, she may not provide the consistency or focus that the business is looking for. As Donald Trump would probably tell us, that's just called smart business.

By no means do I intend to say that women are less deserving or less capable of holding jobs equal to those of men, but rather, there are some aspects of female habit and nature that cause women not to seek the work as competitively.

At the march, there were thousands of posters, some with simple-solution messages that did not specifically call on feminism as the answer to problems with our new president. A million beautiful and inspiring posters could not change the fact that some females prove themselves to be less hireable than men for higher-paying jobs, and vice versa. Until women can stand up and prove to men that we are equals in the fields that they care about, these problems will continue to occur.

Yes.

Adanya Gilmore

Photo Editor

Greetings. It's me again, your local angry black woman.

In the current political climate there is an abundance of confusion, specifically perpetuated by people who want to make change. The problem is, there are many clashing ideas on how to go about it.

People often find creative ways to make political issues seem trivial. For example, conservatives coined the term "liberal snowflakes" to talk about those who marched the day after the inauguration, thus diffusing the gravity of what the march represented.

I say "those who marched" because the Women's March consisted of millions of people, not just women, standing for what they believed in. There was plenty of chatter about how the people who were marching weren't marching for anything, and that those who marched were vulgar and insensitive to all the women that were actually being mistreated in other countries.

This, of course, is a misogynistic method of making women seem ridiculous, their grievances illegitimate and to shut their voices down. If only women knew their place, right?

Feminism has evolved over the years among young people. What feminism means has changed for some people with time, and often you hear people skirt around the term gingerly.

To many, "feminism" inherently sounds like a movement for women to rise above men, and that if it were about equality we would just call it "equality."

The individuals who say this may not be thinking about the rich history of feminism. Whenever tackling a

social issue, there is always a story and a purpose behind it.

The battle women have already fought is forgotten because of how our issues have evolved, but just because our agenda has changed with time does not make our fight any less credible.

True feminism is a blanket term, a mission striving to help disenfranchised people move toward complete equality. It promotes having a more open and thoughtful mindset about the layers of struggle that women experience in a patriarchal society.

The changing political climate has been effective in forcing people to express their stances on feminism and other social issues. Whether you're a celebrity raising awareness or a high school student, anyone can have a perspective. Continuing to listen to each other has a formidable effect on change.

There is a threat to people's bodies in Congress every day because of the new administration where a large majority of men as lawmakers all view it as their duty to implement religion-based persecutions on women's very selves.

Different women experience this oppression in different ways, and it's why feminism isn't just called "equality." Women losing their jobs for getting pregnant, people who may soon be unable to afford birth control because Republicans in Congress want to repeal the Affordable Care Act, the entire pro-life movement, are all what is called systemic oppression.

The feminist movement combats oppression.

In truth, feminism's history is colorful. It is beautiful, vibrant and led by some of the most influential leaders perceived as underdogs who are not what you would think of when someone says the word "feminist."

Its history includes black women,

homeless LGBTQ+ workers and activists that overlooked, white-washed from history books and

Feminism is the Storm. A series of catapulting gay rights led by alienated women, it is civil rights women during a time when women were even more killed, and forgotten as

Being an intersectional feminist is something of. The word has been given by the powerful women fought for equality and

Feminism's background, political figures allow us to bring forth as a community, a school student, anyone can have a perspective. Continuing to listen to each other has a formidable effect on change.

It does not benefit anyone in power to claim their to fight for, because we always been fighting for it's in the streets or in Congress.

Being a human is a generation for other lives together to ensure the best all, which is what feminism. In order to become more these injustices, we cannot patient and understanding that voice their perspective.

nism isn't a concept that women to receive praise. ing a woman," it strives to receive the same rights as that white men received.

I might seem like a whiny high school student it may be beneficial to why addressing inequality you. Perhaps it's more to disregard, and not how one profits from a persecutes others.

Female Genital Mutilation month brings awareness to those fallen victim

Hawraa Alsaedi

Staff Reporter

Though it is not common here in the U.S., the number of victims of female genital mutilation every year is large enough to put it in the limelight.

More than 200 million women alive today have undergone the procedure, with three million girls, around the ages of five to fifteen, at risk every year, according to the World Health Organization.

The United Nations has declared the practice a grave violation of human rights to health, security and physical integrity.

The procedure involves removing, cutting or stitching the female genitalia, which often causes injury to other organs. There are several types, such as clitoridectomy or removal of the clitoris, excision or removal of the clitoris and infibulation, or the narrowing of the vaginal canal by stitching the labia majora.

There are absolutely no health benefits, only pain, infections, shock, childbirth complications and sometimes death.

So why are so many women at risk of such a violent practice?

Many communities see it as a social norm to have little girls cut. It is also deeply rooted in sexist ideas, as women are mutilated without their consent as minors to ensure "purity," or virginity until marriage.

FGM is also believed to make girls more modest and feminine by removing parts seen as "unclean."

Kali Majumdar, an anthropologist at LCC, used her research to explain the reason behind female genital mutilation.

"People will say it's tradition or it's in my religion, but this kind of practice is in many different cultures," Majumdar said. "I, as a feminist, [question] why are we doing this? Who is it going to benefit? It seems like it has a lot to do with controlling women's pleasure by making sex painful so they don't desire it."

Though most common in Africa, Asia and the Middle East, FMG is still found in western countries.

Meg Doster (11) gave her stance on the subject as a member and future of leader of the OHS Feminist Club.

"I know it's a crime against children, it's a crime against humanity and it's a crime against females in general," Doster said. "I know that the risks and consequences far outweigh any benefits."

Doster also mentioned some ways to raise awareness about the issue.

"The more people start talking about it, the more the people who can do something about it might listen and take a stance on this," Doster said.

Majumdar discussed the difference between female circumcision and male circumcision.

"You use the word circumcision and it's something done from a culture's point of view because circumcision is a right of passage," Majumdar said. "The mildest form

of [female genital mutilation] would be the removal of the hood of the clitoris, which is similar to male circumcision."

Majumdar said she does not believe in circumcision or any type of alteration to either gender, citing them as unnecessary.

There are many opinions for and against circumcision of both genders, as some cultures tolerate all levels of genital mutilation and some tolerate none.

But the number of young girls abused by this practice is too high to ignore, even if the problem is not in our own backyard.

They need medical attention because the procedure changes them just as emotionally as it does physically. Many suffer from depression, anxiety and a loss of identity from the traumatic experience.

National organizations have been working to decrease and eventually end FGM, but it also takes everybody to become aware and involved to help end the horrendous practice.

Modern pornography

Johnny Mocny

Entertainment Editor

Pornography is a cause of strife amongst modern Americans alike.

In the last 40 years, porn has changed from a genre of film that only admitted adults to something widely available in a few clicks, which has some worried about how the modern accessibility of porn is affecting our young society.

The effects of porn remain mostly psychological, and that is where the worries are set. The concerns are focused not only on the physical and mental state of porn actors, for which there is a much wider market these days, but for the unrealistic expectations of sex that teenagers might gain for it. Specifically, the expectations placed on women and how they could negatively affect their lives.

Trump administration limits funding for abortions

Paris Wilson

Staff Reporter

The Supreme Court ruled in favor of women to be able to have an abortion performed no matter the state in which they lived in on January 22, 1973.

President Trump has recently signed an order to block foreign aid or federal funding from international family charities that provide abortions, namely Planned Parenthood.

Planned Parenthood has been there for women for years. The clinic doesn't just cater to pregnant women; it also provides counseling, pap smears and the means to treat and prevent STIs.

A law mandating that women cannot have an abortion performed once it has reached 24 weeks passed in 2003.

As of lately, many clinics around the country of have been closing down due to the rigorous regulations that are required to keep the clinics open.

"If pro-lifers want to lower the number of abortions, the best thing they can do is increase access to birth control and sex education that isn't abstinence-based," Nicole Verboncoeur (12) said.

With the death of Supreme Court Judge Scalia, the decision to appoint a new judge is left to Trump, who has made his ideas on abortion clear.

"I'm pro-life. The judge will be pro-life," Trump said back in November during a "60 Minutes" interview.

In the wake of his inauguration,

protests have been held to show resistance to Trump's very vocal ideals that clash with many Americans.

"[Trump] certainly poses a threat, and we definitely need to be concerned, but we do not believe that *Roe v. Wade* would be overturned at this point in time. The precedent has been enforced for over 40 years, and it has survived throughout a variety of administrations," Julie Rikelman, the vice-president of the U.S. legal program at the Center for Reproductive Rights said during an interview conducted by Lisa Ryan of *The Cut*.

The Women's March on Washington had about 500,000 people in attendance. Worldwide participation was around 5 million. In America alone there were at least 408 reported marches and 168 other marches in 81 other countries outside of our borders.

The Women's March raised awareness and issued a commitment in solidarity against the President's ideas. It covered more than just women's issues. The march was for human rights, immigration reform, healthcare reform and environmental protection.

"[The march] was all about supporting each other and showing how strong we are when we are united. Also to let people know we have a voice," Lilly Moylan (12) said. "I attended the march because I wanted to show my support for women and to show that I care about my rights."

Lisa Loomer has recently written a play based off of the *Roe vs Wade* case, which has been playing at Arena Stage in Washington, D.C.

"I wanted people to feel, as they watched the play, that their point of view was represented if nothing else, because that helps people be more open and willing to hear another point of view," Loomer said in an NPR interview.

The play is centered around Jan Roe, a 22-year-old who is on her third pregnancy and feels she can't take care of the child. In court, Roe is going up against Henry Wade, the district attorney of Dallas County.

Norma McCorvey was the "Roe" in the *Roe vs Wade* case.

McCorvey sued Wade's office in an effort to stop the district attorney from enforcing a Texas law that prohibited abortion except in cases of emergency. The law was declared unconstitutional; the case won by a 7-2 majority vote in the supreme court.

Trump's presidency has brought a lot of mixed affirmations when it comes to human rights, specifically women's rights.

"[Trump's presidency] will and already has, emboldened pro life activists. Pence went to the Right For Life march last month and spoke at it. Kasich passed his heartbeat bill two months ago. Conservatives will and already are taking advantage of the current political turmoil to pass whatever bill they can slide under people's noses" Megan Doster (11) said.

Opinion

Avoid exclusivity in feminism

Adanya Gilmore

Photo Editor

True feminism is intersectional, meaning it proposes beliefs for everyone and recognizes that some women experience a different level of oppression than others. Progress for all women means not just giving a voice to those who are white, middle class, cis-gendered, and able-bodied.

Many women assume variations of feminism, and some are less progressive. "White feminism," for example, is a version of femi-

nism that only accounts for white women. It allows some women to move forward while stepping on the backs of women who don't have the same opportunities. It allows some women to be complacent and believe the job is done while other women suffer. There is a great importance in recognizing what position to take when discussing social issues. It immediately weakens those who are already vulnerable and unsafe to speak over their voices.

To further understand the differences between women's experiences, the history of women's disenfranchisement must be examined. In the 50s, while women were

not taken seriously in entering the workforce and expected to be the true prize of a real man, be a maid and a mother in her "place". Black women experienced another form of hatred. Both experiences of women include struggles, but they are vastly different. White women have benefited from the oppression of black women historically. Groups of marginalized people need feminism because it is their very livelihood at stake. Black women are the most terrorized group of women in America, and they face a disgusting hybrid of misogyny that, because of privilege, many others are

not aware of.

It's not just racism that plays a part in feminism. A big part of feminist activism includes making a path for the LGBTQ feminists, disabled feminists, Muslim feminists, and more people who aren't given an immediate gratification for assimilating to the Eurocentric values of society. Intersectional feminism breaks that bubble of personal self-empowerment. Individual feminist values are all well and good, but actual feminism means taking those values and applying them to promote wellness for other people.

Pornography poses controversial questions

According to PureHope, a consulting company, 93 percent of boys are exposed to porn before 18, while 62 percent of girls are. Also, the average age of first witnessing porn is 11 for everyone.

"When it comes to sexual interactions and behaviors, watching porn is the same as watching a romantic comedy," Megan Doster (11) said. "I think it has a damaging effect on teens who go to the internet trying to figure out what sex is."

On *The O'Reilly Factor* in 2007, porn actress Jenna Jameson defended the industry.

"I think it's empowering. When a woman is sexually forward and comfortable with herself, everybody's saying, 'That's bad. You should be ashamed.' That's empowering to me," Jameson said.

Doster criticized the porn industry for its bias.

"There should be more porn for

women," Doster said. "Women feel all the same emotions guys do, but they usually turn to romantic novels to get the same stimuli men get from watching porn."

Doster also criticized the psychological effects.

"It raises expectations pretty unrealistically. It tells the average viewer what bodies are supposed to look like when the majority of bodies in porn are not what [average] people look like."

A male student (12) weighed in on the matter.

"I think pornography is more catered toward men because they're the biggest consumers of it," he said. "I think women don't watch as much porn and that's why the industry isn't geared toward them, not the other way around," the student said.

He responded to the idea of sex education in pornography as well.

"It's fantasy," he said. "Anyone who watches it should know that. Parents should control what their kids watch if they're scared of that. With the technology we have, porn is so easy to find. It's not the porn companies' faults. It's just the way the world is now."

In somewhat of a response to the controversy surrounding porn, PornHub, one of the more successful pornography websites, has devoted part of its site to sex education to counteract the faux sexuality present on the site.

"As the premiere destination for adult entertainment, catering to nearly 70 million daily visitors, we wanted to provide our fans with a trusted education platform they can utilize as their go-to resource for information and advice when it comes to sex," said Corey Price, Vice President of PornHub.

