

THE FLAWS IN FEMINISM



BY RAABIA QURESHI

I am going to be honest: as a brown girl living in Johnson County, my life is pretty easy. But the same cannot be said for so many of my sisters of color, whose strides toward equality aren't receiving coverage and pleas for equality in the workplace aren't being heard. Muslim girls' hijabs are being torn off, black girls are being told they're not good enough and women across the board are being paid less than men.

Instead of covering the challenges these women face on a day-to-day basis, modern-day feminism only caters to white women, advocating for issues important to them. In history classrooms everywhere, we applaud the strides taken by white, female activists such as Susan B. Anthony or Elizabeth Stanton, highlighting their advocacy for women's equality during the women's suffrage period.

What the history books fail to mention is that while these white activists prioritized their own freedom, the oppression of black women continued. Their ignorance paved the way for today's feminist movement by making one thing clear: only an issue that doesn't directly impact white women will always fall low on the list of priorities. By struggling to support those whose identities and issues seem foreign

to them, these so-called "feminists" defeat the purpose of the movement as a whole.

A prime example of this showcases itself every year. The well-known Women's March holds its annual protest in Washington D.C., bringing together thousands of women of various backgrounds in the fight for numerous issues, ranging from abortion rights and LGBTQ rights to health care reform and ending violence.

From the outside, these protests scream equality, power, and transparency, but in reality, the organization is crumbling due to allegations of antisemitism, which have driven off some of its board members, including Muslim activist Linda Sarsour. Also, many women, specifically those of color, have also complained the organization's goals fail to align with their issues.

It's disappointing to watch an organization built on the foundation of supporting all women slowly dismantle itself because its leaders can't work together. If feminist leaders can't agree on advocating for all issues of equality, then what does this say about this so-called "movement" as a whole?

In the past year, more and more women are gaining the confidence to display themselves unapologetically on social media. Famous figures will post pictures advocating for nudity as a form of liberation, explaining how the ability to post nude photos is a power move and a step toward equality.

As a Muslim, I don't believe in publicly displaying my body in such a manner-- but I do believe in having a choice. If posting photos like that is liberating for you, go right ahead. That doesn't give more power to you,

nor does it downplay my stance as a feminist. There is no rigid label to what a feminist looks like nor a set of standards they need to reach "liberation." This narrow view of equality is leading the world to feel bad for Muslim women like myself who garner power through sticking to their ideals.

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If feminism is about reclaiming your own choice, then I don't need the media's pity. I can cover myself from head to toe and still take full advantage of my rights.

On the other hand, pseudo feminism also deserves to be called out. Pseudo-feminists hold a strong reserve to correct all the injustices done to women by lashing out and demeaning men. Under this view, all men are trash, egoistic and misogynistic. Don't get me wrong, some of them truly live up to the title. But, if the mission is to achieve equality between both genders, stigmatizing one of them won't achieve the goal.

Needless to say, there are women whose comments are justified. Instances of being abused, harassed or labeled as "liars" when making rape accusations continue to be a reality for many of them, rightfully shaping their perspectives on men.

It should be our responsibility to address the discrepancies found in today's feminist movement in order to do right by the women who's issues are constantly being overlooked.

But at the same time, I'm tired of advocating for these issues alone. It's exhausting to be at the point of pleading to my fellow peers to let go of their first-world problems and focus on the bigger issues at hand. I could care less about what race you are and the excuses that accompany it, because the act of not caring about issues that don't pertain to you is getting old. The expectation should be to focus on the collective goal as a whole—equality for ALL women.

