

Third wave feminism

Literature



Feminism in the Third World “ À Chacun suffit sa peine”, growing up, this is the line I would hear from my mother every single time I would seem discouraged by life’s adversities. It means everyone has to deal with their own personal struggles I became conscious that my subsistence on this earth would always be about two choices, either facing and overcoming any difficulties that would come my way or running from them. As women we are not a unique monolithic group; therefore, the obstacles and difficulties we encounter in our lifetime are not the same. I believe that a woman’s ethnic background, culture and community are relevant factors in determining the type of difficulties she might have to overcome in her life.

Born and raised in Haiti, where nearly 59% of the women population (13 years and older) is illiterate, my journey to individualism was one on the most challenging. The school system plays a significant role on emphasizing gender roles. Cooking and sewing classes are integral parts of the academic evaluation of young girls. It seems not a long time, I was in the auditorium at school listening to a formal speech about women’s domestic responsibilities. It is within the norms of our society for a young girl to get married right after high school. Contrary to these beliefs I decided to follow my own path. I needed both a family and also a career. It was surprising to our neighbors to see my mother (a stay at home mother who gave birth to 8 children) supporting my decision to wander outside of the norm of our culture. I was shamed for not being married at my age and for pursuing a path that was not considered congruent to femininity.

My father, additionally, was not as supportive as my mother was. He always had to show some of his disappointment. I was chastised on a daily basis. However, I stood strong in my dedication because not only was my decision

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based on personal growth and fulfillment; I was set out to create a path for my younger sisters.

Moving to the United States facilitated my individualization process and gave me access to many opportunities not otherwise available to me if I were to stay in my birth country. I created a set of personal goals and prioritized working towards the completion of my college education. As per Astrid Henry " in Solidarity Sisterhood: Individualism Meets Collectivity in Feminism Third Wave", " Where the third wave has often appeared stuck, however, is in moving beyond self-expression to developing a larger analysis of the relationship between individual and collective experience, culminating in theory and political action." On the same token, self-expression is the basis of my life decision to separate myself from the common beliefs of my culture. As a third wave feminism, I will continue to work my hardest in overcoming any obstacles that will face in my journey to a successful career and personal fulfillment.

My life is not so dissimilar from that of many other girls, successful with pursuing their goals or suppressed by the expectations of their communities. Not having a role model to emulate can be hard, especially if your gut feelings are totally against your actions. S

The political landscape of many democracies exhibits existence of powerful female personalities. Very few female politicians have inherited political positions because of their ties with the ruling elite. It is the power of information that has provided them with that opportunity to argue against stereotype and prejudice from the very powerful male politicians.

The struggle for female empowerment began with the likes of Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797) with her book " A Vindication of the Rights of
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women”, Margaret Fuller (1810-1850) in her book “ Women in the Nineteenth Century”. They advocated for equal chances to the women too by giving out information about the importance of independent women. Coming from a background which there is very few educated women, I could not get the same chance girls are given in more developed democracies. Even though I am a girl child, who is fighting for me? Do the other feminists know that a girl in Haiti cannot pursue her education because her community thinks it’s not a girls place to follow her dreams? I cannot blame women in politics for their actions. Maybe they have also been sucked up with the political rhetoric that is engulfed with most politicians.

I therefore look at the history of women who were not backed by their communities but still went back to liberate their communities from choking up the girl child. Just one more liberated soul is all it takes to empower the community. How can this be achieved without an education?

It is my hope that my younger female siblings would not be limited in achieving their capabilities. The third world feminism in me strives to provide a leeway for my family to explore civility by educating girls. It is my hope that my father will look at this rebel daughter of hers and wish that her other daughters would emulate her. If my community will have an example of a female who went against the norms of culture, let her be admired for doing so. Let other girls in the village dream of becoming like the rebel girl who said no to forced marriage and bondage by culture. Let more mothers be encouraged by the powers of education and enable their girl’s children to also pursue further schooling.

Lack of knowledge alone does not inhibit the peoples powers. The political will bears a huge burden on the progression processes of policies of gender

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parity. If the governments will is not present to harmonies the playing field, it will take more than activism to achieve that. I therefore put myself forward, encouraged by the likes of Malala, young but selfless and bold to be the voice of many others who are not capable of adjudicating for a better opportunity for their lives, especially a better education for themselves.