

UNIDAD EDUCATIVA PARTICULAR JAVIER
BACHILLERATO EN CIENCIAS

MONOGRAPH
“Feminism”

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THIRD BACCALAUREATE - COURSE A

2017 – 2018

I

Gratitude

I would like to thank God for giving me wisdom, and a special thanks to my teacher Patricia Sánchez for giving me lights and guiding me on this path that would not have been easy without her help. To my school for giving me unforgettable experiences and caring so much for my well-being in every way, because they have always known how to be understanding with their students and they have made me see the school as a learning home, where I have been trained both academically and morally, and for that I will be eternally grateful.

Summary

What you are about to read is the history of feminism in its infancy and present, nothing more and nothing less than the pure extract of the struggle of women from different societies. This work is constituted in three parts, which are precisely the three waves of feminism; this fragment of the feminism is deeply linked to several important events through history.

The first wave is located at the time of the French revolution when women began to adopt the libertarian ideologies of the French revolutionaries and demanding their rights to have political and social recognition, the second wave relates the events since mid-nineteenth century until the end of the Second World War, this wave involved women in the struggle for the suppression of racism and slavery, they also were focused on fighting for their right to suffrage.

The monographic work concludes with a third chapter that talks about the third wave and contemporary feminism, explaining how women had achieved some of their goals and changed the world forever. This work will also help the reader to know some of the most important protagonists in the history of feminism, to understand feminism we have to understand its causes so the best way I could explain it is by telling the stories of women who impacted the most in the three waves.

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Introduction

The following monographic work it's about the socio-political importance of the claim of women's rights throughout the history, the purpose of the work is to expose to the reader the struggle of women for equality and seeks to explain the three waves of feminism: The first lasted from the French Revolution until the XIX century, the second lasted from the mid-nineteenth century until the end of the Second World War and the third starts with revolutions from the 60's to the present.

Research on this topic has the same degree of importance for both women and men, the history of feminism is basically general culture but more than that is an achievement that deserves recognition around the world, it is a way to show women to fight for themselves for what they want and a way to show men how important it is to respect it and to live with equality.

There are several authors, for example: Nuria Varela with her book "Feminism for beginners", Simone De Beauvoir, Roxanne Gay, Margaret Atwood, Rebecca Solnit, Virginia Woolf among others. It is difficult to find an exact date of the beginning of feminism, given that in the Illustration Era women began to question the injustices marked by society towards them, however it was in 1900 when the first feminist centers were created.

This work is divided into three chapters: The first one is about some of the important authors of the first wave, specifically Christine Pizan, Mary Wollstonecraft, Olympe de Gouges and

Poullain de Barre. The second chapter is about sufragism, feminist activism and the important event in Seneca Falls. Finally the third chapter talks about the contemporary feminism, shows an explanation of the third wave, an important author like Betty Friedan and feminism on the present and its impact in the 21st century.

It will also expose the negative impact on society of some extremist movements nowadays that have misrepresented the true meaning of being a feminist, more and more women are marching without knowing what they are supporting so the purpose of this topic is to cause reflection in young minds, so that they seek to be educated on the subject.

CHAPTER I

Feminism

1.1 First Wave

The First Wave of feminism it's situated on the Illustration era; it is based on the vindication of the women's rights. This period of time brings us back to the French revolution and it lasted until the mid-nineteenth century. Women began to be present on political and intellectual tribunes

To really understand feminism, we have to look back in time, back to those times of the Century of lights it is where illustration blooms and people start to question the ideas and traditions that ruled their lives. This is how women got inspired to make the famous "Cahiers", a notebook where woman openly expressed their complaints and also demanded rights as the right to suffrage, the reform of the institution of marriage, custody of their children and access to education.

The first woman we need to talk about is Christine de Pizan, known as the first woman to grab a pen and talk about feminism. Born in Venetia on 1364 but raised in France, Christine traced a path that guided hundreds of important women in history. She had the advantage of being supported by two men of her time: her father Tomasso Pizano, who was an Italian astrologist and her husband Etienne de Castel who not only allowed but encouraged her to keep writing and investigating, they knew she was a very smart girl.

De Pizan also proved being brave; at the age of twenty-five she had already lost her husband and her father, left with three children and her old mother. Technically she had only two ways out of her misery: a new marriage or becoming a cloistered nun, surprisingly she didn't choose any of those options she chose to keep writing and that's how she economically supported what was left of her family.

On one of her works named "the city of ladies" she expressly talked about how she imagined a city where men didn't promote wars or chaos. To write this book she ensures that she only had to ask to herself the key questions, and in that reflection she found her key answers. She definitely couldn't understand how it was possible for clerics and laity to discredit so hard on women, making such a good use of lexicon and being very instructed man.

As she mentions in her work:

I started to examine my being and my behavior and also those of other women that I've had the occasion to frequent, both princesses and great ladies and women of medium class and modest condition, who were happy to confess their most intimate thoughts. I proposed to decide, in consciousness, if the testimony gathered by so many illustrious men could be wrong.[CITATION Cri95 \l 12298] (pg.34)

Within the main authors of the first wave we have Poullain de Barre, born in Paris on 1647; a young priest who also turned to be a Cartesian philosopher but there was something much more important than these two: he was also a feminist. Since he was a child he hated authority and fought for what he believed, unfortunately this was a dangerous path that led him to suffer the consequences; for example, being banished of his country and sadly destined to low income and distant parishes. He made famous the phrase “the mind does not have sex”, criticized the roots of prejudice and promoted the fact that the cure for inequality was to allow women to study.

The young priest teaches us that in the history of society, men always acted in a way that was taken for granted the fact that force always prevailed the reason, only judging women by what men allowed them to do, wresting women’s rights only because of physiological differences.

De Barre also points out that:

This conviction, like most of our certainties about the uses and traditions, it’s nothing more than a simple prejudice that we form based on the appearance of things when we don’t look at them closely. We would disabuse if we took the bother of tracing things to their sources and judging what was done before in

contrast of what's done today, in other words, if we compared those ancient customs with those of the present.[CITATION FRAnd \l 12298]

The prejudice and ignorance were the main reasons that pushed men to believe that traditions were synonym of absolute truth. Feminism is an unwanted son of Illustration, but that didn't stop Poullain's feminist ideals.[CITATION Ame01 \l 12298]

On the other hand, we have Olympe de Gouges (Marie Gouze) who was born in France on 1748; she was considered a pioneer in modern feminism. This woman of letters wrote novels and plays that had to do with the defense of her feminist opinions, but she became more famous when she published the ``Declaration of women's and female citizen's rights'' as a sign of disagreement with the Parliament.

She couldn't stand the fact that her society was full of hypocrite revolutionary politicians that claimed to talk about ``universal'' rights, she was also a defender of the most controversial issues starting from the slavery of black people to female rights. De Gouges was severely criticized to the point of being called a prostitute, she even received a letter from her father in which he expressed his total disagreement with her writing.

Just as the book mentions it Feminism for beginners she said, ``women would dictate the laws. This revolution would be dangerous. So, I wish the ladies not to put on the doctor's cap and

to retain their frivolity even in the writings. As long as they lack common sense they'll be adorable" (Valera, 2005, p. 25)

Throughout her controversial life, she gained the hatred of the French revolutionaries because she never stopped protesting, she didn't care about the risks she was taking. Gouges protested strongly against Maximilien Robespierre, a politician who was part of the political party named "Jacobinos"; he was responsible for the death of many people. Olympe de Gouges was imprisoned because of her protest against Robespierre, she was tried in the revolutionary court and ended up being guillotined on November 3, 1793. None of this was in vain, since she inspired many women to keep fighting for their rights.

Finally, but not least, we have Mary Wollstonecraft, born in Spitalfields, London on 1759. At first she wasn't a woman of letters, because her family didn't care about her education at all. She got educated on her own; she took a job in Ireland but couldn't stand it for long. After she returned to London, she stayed at Joseph Johnson's house and she got work as his personal writer; consequently, she began to take an interest in politics and started studying it.

This woman became famous for writing the "vindication of the rights of men", a text that she managed to write in less than thirty days. She was the one that came up with the idea that children should have the right of a free education, and the same quality of education regardless of whether if their families enjoyed the same economic benefits or not.

She asked herself the question; ¿how is it possible for a woman to educate a child when she had never been educated herself? And that is how she got the courage to write the “vindication of the rights of women”. In this work, she demanded the right to education for women, economic independence and political participation.

Mary Wollstonecraft fell in love twice; the first time she fell in love was with Gilbert Imlay, with whom she had an illegitimate daughter due to the fact that she was against marriage, still she felt guilty because she didn't want her daughter to suffer for being illegitimate. After she had a painful break with Imlay, she fell in love for the second time; she fell for William Goldwin, they both defended the idea of free love but despite this they left their beliefs and got married, they had a daughter named Mary Shelley.

It's important to talk about the personal life of these women, because we can see what they had to struggle and we can visualize their lives with other eyes. Mary Wollstonecraft was a modern feminist that gave feminism the basis for its defense: what was considered common in women was no more than a consequence of repression and the social discriminations.

As Mary Wollstonecraft (1792) mentions, “Men generally seem to employ their reason to justify prejudices that they have taken in they can't tell how, rather than to root them out. Only a strong mind can resolutely from its own principles”[CITATION MAR92 \l 12298]

CHAPTER II

Second Wave

2.1 Women's rights

In the Second Wave, women not only fought for the female rights but also for the abolition of slavery. When they fought for the independence of their country, they gained experience in the civil fight and acquired knowledge of social and political issues; women took initiative to fight because they felt compassion and somehow saw their pain and oppression reflected in the slaves.

At this time there was also a Protestant Reform where women took an important role. The Protestant Reform consisted of an uprising of sects that challenged the Catholic Church and women were part of the political practices of Evangelicals but mostly Quakers. The Quakers opened the doors to women and gave them the opportunity to participate publicly, they fully supported the fact that women could learn to read and write; and did not hesitate to encourage them to participate in the Protestant political practices.

The support given by these religious groups to women caused the percentage of female illiteracy to fall considerably, and as a consequence university college for women were created. Once women got education, nineteenth-century American feminism was born and the key to putting it in operation was an injustice occurred in 1840 when the anti-slavery world congress was being held and four American women decided to be part of it.

The congress, which took place in England, was scandalized by the presence of women and refused to recognize them as delegates, so the four activists had to return home humiliated. This shame was the last straw that poured out the patience of feminists, despite their achievements the world still retained those exclusive thoughts. The women of this time were in charge of the difficult causes and were willing to do anything to get their objective; they were brave at the moment when they felt like they had nothing to lose and thus they awakened their untiring desires to fight.

Another important event of the Second Wave was the declaration of Seneca Falls or as some say, the declaration of feelings; why is this event called like that? Well, women were very passionate at the moment of making this statement, because the declaration of Seneca Falls was nothing more or nothing else than the manifest of the denunciations towards the restriction and inequality of their rights. Rights that had been taken away just because they were women but rights that belonged to them just because of the fact that they were human beings.

The Seneca Falls declaration lasted two days, the nineteenth and twentieth of July 1848; directed by Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, this document aspired to the abolition of restrictions that women had, it claimed the right to be taken into account in the political and civil aspects of the country and this was supported by both women and men.

As the text declares:

We decide: That the women have remained unsatisfied for too much time within certain limits that some corrupt customs and a distorted interpretation of the sacred scriptures have pointed out for her, and it is time for her to move in the wider environment that the creator has assigned her.[CITATION Sen48 \l 12298]

After this event, women got certain points taken into account except the most important: The right to vote. In 1866, the Republican Party granted the right to vote to the slaves, but once again denied it to women. Women suffered a lot to get the right to suffrage, not even the

antislavery movement supported them, and this has only one explanation: they were afraid to lose the privilege they had been granted. It was a painful betrayal, when no one else cared about slaves, women did, and they supported them and didn't care about the consequences. Justice was in their hands, and no one but them would save them.

Another fragment of the text says: "All laws that prevent women from occupying the position that their conscience dictates, or that situates her in a lower position than the male, are contrary to the great precept of nature" (Valcárcel, 2001 pp. 21-22)

A lot of time passed before women got the right to suffrage, it wasn't until August 1920 when women succeeded. This is the living example that perseverance is success, even though the results were seen little by little they never gave up. The protests and parades were the wake-up call for President Woodrow Wilson.

As Wilson (1918) stated in a speech, "We have made partners to women in this war. ¿Should we admit them only to an association of suffering and sacrifice and job, and not to an association of right?" (Para. 6).

Now let's talk about Charlotte Woodward, this woman was the only activist from Seneca Falls who lived long enough to enjoy the right to vote. This fact is surprising due to the fact of the time that had to pass so that suffrage was equal.

To close this chapter with a flourish, there is a movement that deserves to be mentioned in the history of the Second Wave: Emmeline Pankhurst and the Suffragette. She was a British political activist and the leader of this movement, and of course her followers were called the “suffragettes”, these women had a way of imposing justice that many criticize but either for good or for bad, she revolutionized. Emmeline’s eldest daughter had a discussion with Sir Edward Gray that cost her freedom. After that, Emmeline and her followers went out to the streets to do manifestations that caused the fuss of the people and some damage to private property. This was obviously a strategy; her goal wasn’t to cause disorder in the city she was seeking to call the attention of the government. This was a response to the injustice committed against her daughter.

Pankhurst declared:

We interrupted a big number of meetings and we were violently expelled and insulted. We were often painfully wounded and bruised. The condition of our sex is so deplorable that our duty is to violate the law with the purpose to call the attention about the reasons why we do it. (Emmeline Pankhurst, n.d, para. 8)

CHAPTER III

Third Wave

3.1 Contemporary Feminism

To start this third chapter, it's important to talk about the focus of the third wave, even if it's hard to believe women in this time were forgotten again. It was almost like the entire struggle they had to go through to get changes in their lives had been in vain and women started to feel desperate. The doctors received many patients with unexplained chronic pain and psychologists received many patients with depression, anxiety and suicidal thoughts and guess what? They were all women. All this came about because of Hitler's Nazi speech: the three K (Kinder, Kirchen, Kurchen) that means kids, church and kitchen. This speech was spread all over the world even though Hitler was defeated and women were facing a problem more complicated.

In fact, some women were “happy” to take on the role of housewife, because society made her think that she already had everything she could ask for but this was no more than a lie created by selfish men who wanted to come back home and find their wives cooking their meals, raising their children and cleaning their house. But the sad thing is that some women believed this was obligatory for them, the good thing is that we have an important woman who opened their eyes.

Betty Friedan is the author of this awakening:

Some of us (in 1963, half of the women of the United States) had already committed the unforgivable sin of working out of the house to contribute to the payment of the mortgage or from the grocery store account. Those who did it also felt guilty for betraying their femininity, for undermining the masculinity of their husbands, for neglecting the upbringing of their children by daring to work for money, regardless of the amount needed. They couldn't recognize, not even to themselves, that they felt about charging half the amount of what had been paid to a man for the same work or for having to write the report by which he was recognized and ascended. [CITATION Bet63 \l 12298]

Betty described the situation of the women of her time, at first she wanted it to be an essay but they did not let her publish it...so she decided to make it a book. That was how Betty Friedan motivated millions of women to be whatever they wanted to be, she took five years to publish

her book and when she published it she was encouraged to divorce and finally did it, she was a woman who suffered a lot of physical and psychological abuse from her husband.

In 1966 she became one of the founders and first president of the National Organization of Women, and then in 2000 she publishes a book full of her experiences and anecdotes called ‘‘My life so far’’. She said that everything she did through her life was dedicated to her parents, for her dad because she didn’t want men to suffer the frustrations of his wives and also for her mother because she didn’t want women to suffer any abuse caused by their husbands.

Currently there is another important fight in discussion: Women are fighting for everyone to receive a feminist education by law. The only problem here is that there are some feminist movements that are behaving in an extremist way and what do I refer to? The world is full of feminists that carry a green or purple handkerchief and think that they will solve everything with violence.

The contemporary feminists have this twisted motto that says ‘‘death to the male’’, this is obviously not what our ancestors fought for. The feminism seeks to achieve a society where both men and women can have the same rights and love and respect each other, that is the real ideal. Like Malala Yousafzai (2013) said, ‘‘if one man can destroy everything, why can’t a girl change it?’’ (p.12) And that is precisely what all women should seek to, solve problems without violence and to be smarter than the people that are trying to hurt them, otherwise we will just end up becoming the same thing as they.

What this world needs are more love and less war, we need to understand that none of us is perfect and as human beings we are going to make mistakes, and also we have to understand that others can make mistakes too and those mistakes can be directed to your life, the key to this thought is “ I often make the mistake of thinking that something that is obvious to me is just as obvious to everyone” (Chimamanda Ngozi, 2014, p.4). Not everyone understands the same things you do and in the same way you do, and this does not mean that the feminist fight should not continue, on the contrary we should fight for all of us to be feminist but we will not achieve this by forcing people.

There should be more campaigns; more marches, more world debates, more revolution but all of this should have a focus on love, like this:

Gender matters all over the world. And today I would like to ask that we start dreaming with a plan for a different world. A fairer world, a world of men and women happier and more honest with themselves and this is the way to begin: we have to raise our daughters differently and also our sons. (Chimamanda Ngozi, 2014, p.7).

To properly raise our children, we must stop inculcating false stereotypes, such as the ‘though men’, ‘boys will be boys’, ‘you cry like a little girl’, ‘that profession is for women’. Our generation should start to eradicate the stereotype of a boy who never cries, never shows his feelings and has many girlfriends, and the stereotype of a girl that is delicate and week. We have biological differences but we both have the same potential, my final advice for the reader is: raise women to be leaders and raise boys to support women, we all deserve to enjoy the same rights.

Conclusions

At the end of this monographic work it is concluded that:

- Feminism is a revolutionary movement that is still necessary today because of the machismo that affects millions of women all over the world. It was a very difficult struggle for women's rights that lasted for decades and that unfortunately had many victims in the process.
- Thanks to our predecessors is that women can have rights and we must always remember that union and perseverance is strength. Women should never attack each other, on the contrary women should support each other. The old feminists are those who left the legacy of female empowerment, they left it marked in history forever.
- It is clear that feminism is a movement that has never aimed to seek violence, it has always sought to promote tolerance and respect between people regardless of gender. The current extremist movements do not represent the true feminism.
- It is a movement that has achieved several of its objectives but not in its entirety, that's why every day the fight is stronger and women seek to represent their countries in important political and social positions. Currently they have agreements with many foundations and organizations that promote peace.
- The goal has never been to promote the superiority of women much less hatred of men. Women of our society need to investigate the principal objective of feminism, to avoid confusions or discrimination.

Recommendations

At the end of this work it is recommended that:

- It is advised to investigate more of the history of contemporary feminism, so that the reader can have a better understanding of current reality. Above all investigate the problems that are defended in feminism today, for example abortion, demand for equal wages and disagreements with church.
- I encourage all young readers to share the acquired knowledge so that in this way the egalitarian thought is spread throughout the world and people of all social classes, races or religion can be aware of the importance of being a feminist.
- Encouraging self-esteem in women is a good way to help her embrace her identity and to never let anyone tell her she can't do something. The advice would be to remind each woman how valuable she is and the respect with which she deserves to be treated.

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