

GIRLTALK

SPRING 2017

**EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
WITH GREY'S ANATOMY'S
KIM RAVER**

**THOUGHT-PROVOKING
THINKPIECES**

A DIVERSITY OF OPINIONS

**PERSPECTIVES FROM ALL OVER
THE WORLD- GUATEMALA, NEPAL,
AND MORE!**

"WOMEN IN HIP HOP MUSIC"

"WHAT FEMINISM MEANS TO US!"

WOMEN IN THE MEDIA



TABLE OF CONTENTS

GENDER INEQUALITY IN AFRICA <i>By Charlotte Kramon</i>	3-4
WHAT FEMALE IN THE MEDIA IS YOUR ROLE MODEL?	4
COLORISM <i>By Eunice Park</i>	5
GLOBAL QUESTIONNAIRE	5-6
TECHNOLOGY/ PROJECTS SPOTLIGHT <i>By Eunice Park</i>	6
AN INTERVIEW WITH KIM RAVER <i>By Charlotte Kramon</i>	7-10
WOMEN IN HIP-HOP MUSIC <i>By Charlotte Kramon</i>	11-13

15

UNIFORMS AND SEXUALIZATION IN THE MEDIA

By Zelda Barnz

16

THOUGHTS ON THIRD WAVE FEMINISM

By Matt Dederick

17

WHY I DON'T SUPPORT FEMINISM

By Grace Chung

18-20

WHAT FEMINISM MEANS TO US

By Eunice, Matilda, and Charlotte

WELCOME TO GIRLTALK

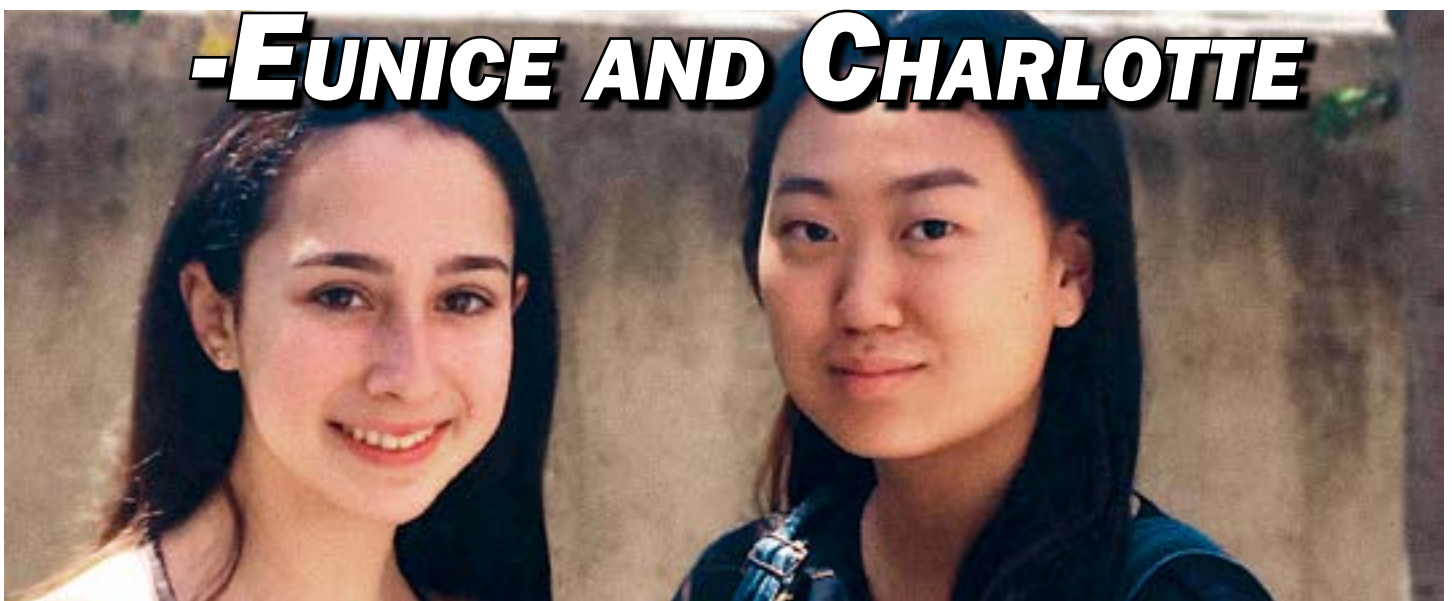
We are the editors, Eunice and Charlotte. Through Girl Talk Magazine, we hope to provide a forum for people to discuss and be informed about gender related issues around the globe. With articles covering a wide range of topics and perspectives, Girl Talk is a magazine completely run and organized by high school students. Hearing from all genders and different sides of the political (both liberal and conservative), economic, and social spectrum is essential to us as editors! We are not a one-sided organization, and welcome critical and constructive discussion of gender.

Our first issue, Women in the Media, revolves around the relationship between women and media around the world. It explores the different portrayals of women in the media, and shines a light on issues such as colorism, media sexualization, and Hollywood sexism. A special interview features Kim Raver, actress Teddy on Grey's Anatomy, who speaks about what it means to be a woman in Hollywood and advice for being creating a powerful generation of females. Multiple perspectives, with high school girls from Guatemala, China, and the US, are included in Women in the Media.

Although this first issue has a smaller writer base with articles primarily written by the editors and questionnaire responses, in our future issues, you'll mostly see the work of our expanding staff, peers, and audience submissions, which we would love to receive! To submit articles, feedback, thoughts, and ideas, email us at Girltalkmagazine@gmail.com, or feel free to contact us through our instagram and facebook. We can't wait to hear all the ideas you have to share!

Like any project, this all started with an idea. One of us had a crazy idea to develop a global feminist magazine, and approached the other who was extremely passionate about gender inequality as well. After multiple hours drafting content, Starbucks meetups, and design meetings, this idea transformed into a reality. At the end of the day, we hope to provide a platform for everyone, all genders and sides of the political spectrum, to discuss how gender plays out in our lives and on a global scale.

Enjoy!





GENDER INEQUALITY IN AFRICA

by Charlotte Kramon, OAKWOOD SECONDARY SCHOOL

Gender equality is a very global issue—we see disparities and improvements occurring in a variety of countries, and we also see these take place in different ways depending on the place.

It's important to educate ourselves on the issues of female empowerment and gender equality that occur all around the world and not only in America—today, we're going to have a look at the continent of Africa, and in later issues we might focus on specific countries in Africa.

Gender discrimination isn't only problematic for the females of the country themselves—it leads to a loss of an average of around \$95 billion a year according to the the Africa Human Development 2016 report (from the UN development program.) Women earn

70% what men do, and are at increased risks when it comes to sexual violence.

They're vastly underrepresented in secondary education, and 66% of the non-agricultural informal labor sector is made up of women. They also spend twice as much time as men in domestic labor—this includes chores such as taking care of family members and going to wells to get water. While 70% of the crops in agriculture are produced by women, they only own 2% of the land.

However, although women make up only 22% of the senior positions for companies, that number is lower for North America as well as developed Asia. The amount of women and young girls who are victims of rape and sexual assault that impacts what they can do with their lives is massive and upsetting.

Despite the inequalities and significant disparities, progress is being made. In Rwanda, 64% of the parliamentarians are women. In Sub-Saharan Africa in 1999, there 85 girls for every 100 boys in primary schools. As of 2008, this number rose to 91 girls for every 100 boys.

But, gender inequality is still a seri-

While 70% of the crops in agriculture are produced by women, they only own 2% of the land.

ous problem, and statistically, it's a larger problem in countries with low GDPs and less wealth than it is in wealthier

countries.

Seema Jayachandran, from Northwestern University, writes in a November 2014 article examining the roots of gender inequality in developing countries article that this is no coincidence. There are endless theories and reasons as to why this is true. For example, there's the idea that poverty brings out cultural differences that favors males.

Also, larger economies focus less on agriculture and manufacturing jobs, which necessitate greater strength that is assumed to exist more in men. Therefore, this decreases labor opportunities for women.

Schooling also greatly translates to the agriculture industry. If education leads to higher income, than parents are naturally inclined to send their boys to receive an education. Another huge problem is the rape and sexual assault that occurs because it stops women from working. So, we know there's a problem. We know there are significant gender gaps. But there is so much people can do to help and a huge variety of opportunities.

The article that I mentioned earlier states that a key issue in the lack of female participation in the workforce is the risk and frequency of giving birth. There's an organization called Jewish World Watch whom I've worked with before, and it focuses on fighting genocide in Africa.

They support a women's center that houses young women who are victims of rape and many of them eventually receive an education so that they can continue on to be successful. The same organization also helps young girls who are taken as soldiers in the army but are used as "bush wives" and are subjected to severe sexual assault.

It's so easy to find charities that help women in Africa through a simple google search. Spreading awareness to the people around us is essential in making any change for any issue we care about.

People need to be aware of these severe and dangerous inequalities occurring around the world, and everyone can contribute and participate in the process of eradicating these difficulties.

WHAT FEMALE IN THE MEDIA IS YOUR ROLE MODEL AND WHY?

Maddie Blush, OAKWOOD SECONDARY SCHOOL

Michelle Obama because she is a powerful woman who uses her influence to fight for a better and more equal world.

Zelda Barnz, OAKWOOD SECONDARY SCHOOL

Malala Yousafzai. I read her book, I Am Malala, and really loved it. I of course respected and admired her before that, but the book really opened me up to the details of what she went through and how she continued to push for women's education and her determination is incredibly motivating. my favorite quote of hers is "we realize the importance of our voices only when they are silenced."

Wilder Smith, OAKWOOD SECONDARY SCHOOL

I don't really decide to have role models just because I haven't seen that much change in the past and the only way we can find change is by trying new things, so I try to be different than anyone in the media. Personally I haven't seen much change done by one specific woman in the media but I think when women come together through social media platforms like Instagram they can do lots of change.



COLORISM

by Eunice Park, OAKWOOD SECONDARY SCHOOL

Women all across the globe face unrealistic beauty standards. One of the most prevalent beauty standard that exists across the globe today, is the concept of “beautiful skin”.

Beautiful skin is not labeled by health, but rather by an overarching stigma of colorism that damages and forces many women across the globe to participate in unhealthy skin bleaching practices.

In magazines, billboards, TV, and all other forms of media, “light” and “fair” is perceived as beautiful.

Even in ethnic countries such as India and the Caribbean, their pop culture is bombarded with images of European beauty standards that cause women to feel inadequate about their naturally darker complexions.

An epidemic of women participating in skin bleaching is occurring across the world today.

The origin of skin bleaching is not so clear, but social scientists believe that it does have European influences. According to Dr. Yaba Blay (2011), “much of the history of European aesthetic

practices is a history of whitening skin” (p. 20).

Because of Queen Elizabeth I’s efforts to make her skin appear ghostly white, nearly transparent, extremely pale skin became known as the “Elizabethan ideal of beauty.” This ideal and practice of skin whitening was carried over to the Americas by female European settlers (p. 21) Today, in the 21st century, skin bleaching is more prevalent than ever.

In 2012, Indians reportedly consumed an estimated 233 tonnes of bleaching products (Rajesh, 2013), and in terms of sheer numbers, Indians make up the largest skin bleaching market.



In some African cities, as many as 52-77% of women use skin lighteners. A Synovate market survey in 2004 showed that 50% of respondents in the Philippines reported using skin lighteners.

In places like Japan, China, Taiwan, and Korea, global surveys report that 20-50% of the of respondents had used skin bleaches and that 20-50% would use more if they could afford it.

Mercury laden creams are still widely available in parts of Latin America, and in the U.S. women of all races, including Europeans and whites, have long legacies of skin whitening or lightening. (Glenn, 2008, pp. 284-295).



GLOBAL QUESTIONNAIRE

by Eunice Park, OAKWOOD SECONDARY SCHOOL

What do you want to be when you grow up?

This is a question frequently asked from adults to children who are growing up.

Although people have natural interests and talents towards certain career fields, it’s interesting to examine the role

of media that influences the answer to this commonly asked question, specifically in girls across the world.

GUATEMALA, AGE 14:

“I want to be a teacher. It’s hard for girls to go to school, and a lot of our families don’t think that it’s worth it to

send girls to school. But I love school. I love learning new things, and when I’m older, I want to be a teacher to make sure that all girls will be encouraged to go to school and love learning as much as I do.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, AGE 16:

“All throughout my life, I grew up with the media feeding me the image of a ‘beautiful girl’ being shy, reserved, and helpful. I tried being that girl, but I failed, because I’m just the complete opposite.

I love speaking out about the issues I’m passionate about, and I’m not afraid to stand up or start an argument with someone who I don’t agree with. I want to be a lawyer when I grow up, and even if I’m never going to be that “beautiful” girl the media loves, I’m fine with it.”

CHINA, AGE 17:

“My parents wanted a boy, and they made that very clear from the moment I was born. Although China no longer has a one child policy, back when I was born they did, and my parents left me here (in an orphanage) so they could erase the one child they had, and start over.

Because of that, when I was younger, I thought that male was the better sex, so whenever someone asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up, I always said careers that would help people, help males, such as a nurse or cook. Now, that I know that I am strong, and women are just as strong, if not better than men, I want to choose a career that makes me happy. I want to be a scientist, for me.”

GUATEMALA, AGE 16:

“I don’t know what I want to be when I grow up, but I know who I want to be when I grow up. I want to be independent.

All my life, in magazines, TV, and books, I’ve been told to rely on other men for help, and I’m tired to being seen as weak and unintelligent. I’m tired of only being praised in the news for my looks or only being a supporting character in the books I read.

Maybe I’ll own a business, or be a doctor, or a lawyer, but whatever I end up becoming- I will be independent and my main goal in life is to support myself without the help of any other man.”

TECHNOLOGY/ PROJECTS SPOTLIGHT

by Eunice Park, OAKWOOD SECONDARY SCHOOL

WOMAN INTERRUPTED: APP

Created by the Brazilian company BETC São Paulo, Woman Interrupted operates off of a very simple premise. It wants to help users identify, learn, and prevent instances of “interruption” in their daily lives. It does so by discreetly listening in on conversations (only when it’s set to record) and time-stamping every instance of interruption by a man.

“The objective of the Woman Interrupted App is to generate awareness and more debate around Maninterrupting, one of the many kinds of violence against women,” Gal Barradas, the founder and co-CEO of BETC São Paulo says. “It’s a sexist behavior that happens precisely when she cannot finish her speech because a man unnecessarily interrupts her.”

WOMEN UNDER SIEGE: ONLINE JOURNAL

WMC (Women Under Siege) is a journalism project that investigates how rape and other forms of sexualized violence are used as tools in genocide and conflict throughout the 20th century and into the 21st.

Originated by Gloria Steinem, it builds on the lessons revealed in the anthology *Sexual Violence Against Jewish Women During the Holocaust* by Sonja Hedgepeth and Rochelle Saidel, and also in *At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape and Resistance—a New History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power* by Danielle McGuire.

In the belief that understanding what happened then might have helped us prevent or prepare for the mass sexual assaults of other conflicts, from Bosnia to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, this Women’s Media Center project is exploring this linkage to heighten public consciousness of causes and preventions.

TAMPON RUN

Two New York City high school girls have now come up with a video game called Tampon Run where the heroine is on a mission “to rid the world of the menstrual taboo”.

“The iOS version has the same concept and message as the web game, however it includes new features to make the game more engaging. It now gets harder over time, includes a new enemy, a leaderboard and Game Center achievements,” said Houser. “Also, when enemies are hit with tampons they now turn into pads that fly away.”

“In light of everything that’s happened with GamerGate, we hope Tampon Run shows people that women have an important place in gaming. I hope the next generation of game developers (and engineers in the tech world in general) includes a lot more women,” Houser said.

“Tampon Run is the product of a larger movement,” Gonzales added. “A movement to teach teens and kids to code, and of course in the case of Girls Who Code, to close the gender gap in tech.”

AN INTERVIEW WITH KIM RAVER

by *Charlotte Kramon*, OAKWOOD SECONDARY SCHOOL

Charlotte interviewed Kim Raver, who plays Teddy on Grey's Anatomy. She gave unique insight to the world of gender in the media, specifically in television and film, in a detailed conversation covering a wide variety of topics on gender, including role models, body image, how strong women are perceived, and her experiences in the world of acting.

Girl Talk: As a woman in Hollywood, are you ever in situations in which your gender becomes an obstacle or problematic? (i.e. actresses, artists/singers, etc.)

Kim Raver: I don't think I was aware that gender was an issue until recently. I've always been aware that there's one woman role to fifteen men roles in theater, (which is where I started,) in TV, and in films. My mom was a producer when I was growing up, and that was the 80s, so she was one of the only women producers-I had this great example of women in the workforce. So, I think about the beginning of my career, and I now hear all these stories in media talking about an example of sexism or walls because of being a woman. It's not until I reflect back [on moments in my career] and say, Oh, that was blatantly sexist. But I think part of women just say, Oh, well, that's the way it is. When I watched Michelle Obama and Hillary Clinton talking during this whole election I was so moved to be like, Oh, I'm actually not alone, and what has happened in the past is actually not ok. I think it's really great that you're starting this magazine because we can have more dialogue as women from a positive standview, rather than a blaming standview-that's my goal with you. Not to bash the business, but to

say, Ok, what can we learn from women in the industry and from that, how can we go forward?

GT: Do you remember any specific situations in which you've encountered sexism or your gender has become an obstacle?

KR: There's been a lot of sexual advances where you go, That person is flirting with me, and I'm saying no to this flirtation because that's not the way I get ahead in the business. In the last year, with the election and people talking about Trump and sexual assault, you hear all these really great women coming forward. Whether you are pro or against that, hearing all that great dialogue helps. There's been many auditions with incredible representations, but you go to a meeting and there's completely inappropriate advances which I would turn down because, again, I was raised to believe (and maybe this is naive) that because of talent and hard work, and yes, luck in this



business, I'm going to move forward. I can't control the other stuff. But then, there are amazing men out there who are in position of hiring and amazing women who are in position of hiring and they do hire you for your talent. Women have to learn how to navigate the system, and I think the system at this point in time is run mostly by men-which is changing. Women are finally having a voice and saying, This is not acceptable. The dialogue is definitely happening, and that's really important.

GT: Over the last decade, has the perception of women in media improved or changed? How?

KR: It's definitely changing-and I say changing-and definitely improving. We have a long way to go, especially when you look now at the election. Maybe people weren't ready for a woman president, but for me, it was empowering to see Hillary running and it brought up a lot of dialogue. A specific example of a woman speaking up is when Jennifer Lawrence wrote an incredible letter speaking to equal pay. She brought up American Hustle and how even though she was the main draw to that film, she was not being paid the same amount of her male counterparts. I've experienced that-where people who don't have the same experience or track record make more money because they are men. Jennifer Lawrence says in her letter that if, as a woman, you speak out and are advocate for yourself, you become labeled the "difficult one." I'd love to see that change-where women can stand up for themselves, whether it be equal pay, more women's roles, etc. Women are supporting women. Meryl Streep has a fund for women screen-

writers. I definitely feel how a woman director is treated differently on set than a male director when she is of equal talent to other male directors. Because she's a woman, there's an immediate judgement. I do think it's changing, and women are finding our voice. Ashley Judd has been outspoken, and Patricia Arquette demanded equal pay in her Oscar speech last years. It takes women to lay down foundations and start the dialogue. So I think it's changing. Do I wish it were changing faster? Yeah. But I think we're definitely headed in a positive direction.

GT: About body image...what effect do you think Hollywood and the media in general has on young girls who are struggling with body confidence?

KR: Body image has really changed from when I was first starting out. I felt like there was one way to look, and that was this super thin, one-size fits all kind of thing. Now, we see Jennifer Lopez, Serena Williams, Lena Dunham, Melissa McCarthy, the Kardashians... just so many different body types that are celebrated. There are so many different sizes, and there's not one size that's beautiful, so I love to see that that has changed a little bit. I don't know what it's like to be a teenager now. It's so different from

when I was growing up. I'm sure there's pressure to be what is in fashion at the moment, and again, I'm not a teenager so I don't know, but I feel like there's less pressure to be one thing and there's more examples to be different things. Even Lena Dunham-I've never seen someone so fearless on camera, not feeling like she has to conform. That's because of talent. She's just an uber talent and smart. In your generation, there's much more embracing on finding your power, and that will also lead to success. I'm sure being a teenager there's tons of images put out there, but at least now they're diverse images.

GT: What are the beauty standards in Hollywood and media? Do you agree with them?

KR: One main thing is youth. That's for sure a huge thing especially for women. Men can age, and they look at 30-year-old women and say that they're too old to play wife of a 50-year-old man, which is horrifying to me. The face of beauty in Hollywood has definitely evolved. It used to be blonde and blue-eyed, and now you've got Kerry Washington and Viola Davis, who's older. Halle Berry was a bond girl, and usually those women are coined as they "beauties."

GT: Let's say a woman was an outstandingly talented actress but she didn't adhere at all to today's beauty standards. Theoretically, do you think that would get in her way when it comes to auditions, casting, and success in general? Why and how?

KR: Yes and no. What is beauty? If you're asking me what beauty is as opposed to a studio head what beauty is...I mean, is beauty just what is current at the moment? And then that's what everyone wants? For me, beauty is when someone walks in the room and there's an intelligence and energy that takes your breath away. We know it's that person who is confident in who they are but also vulnerable and smart. Beauty is totally different than what it was in the 80's. If you look different than what is the hype at the moment, then, yes, it's probably more difficult to get representation and to audition until someone breaks that mold...until the Lena Dunham breaks that mold. When you're first starting out, you're always trying to do what someone wants-in an audition, or casting, and I realized that I can only be the best me that I can be and nobody's going to be like that because it's me. That's when things really started happening for me.



GT: Do you think your answer to the previous question would be the same if it were about men?

KR: First I was going to say no, and that it was much easier for men. But then I think about many teenage boys, and I see now that there's so much media around them, like body image, so there is already this pressure to conform to a ripped body and to be a certain way. When I was growing up, I don't think guys had that pressure. So in a way, men today have to conform to a certain body image, but it's a different game for men than it is for women. Women are not supposed to age, they're supposed to have an incredible body. Hollywood sets the machine with all of the glossy magazines of what you should be wearing and how much you should be spending on a bag. To me, all that is is a perpetual feeding of the machine of how we are all supposed to be and I think that's definitely much harder for women than men.

GT: What do you think constitutes a good female role model in the media for young girls? Who is your role model and why?

KR: I talked a little about this, but my mom is a huge role model for me. During a time in New York City when in advertising, there weren't a lot of women working, and she started out in the lower position-most of the women who were in advertising were secretaries. That was not the path she was going to take, and she became the head of production at one of the biggest ad agencies. That was definitely forging a path that had not been there before. That's incredible to see a working woman. It's like that first question you asked me-where I'm in a situation and uncomfortable because of men or whatever-I didn't really see it because I had an example of a rising woman, hard work, creative talent and supportive women around me. That was pivotal for me-to see that it was possible to persevere. To look back at the last election cycle, it's incredible to hear Michelle Obama. I think she's an incredible role model because she's

intelligent, compassionate, and is able to get her points across without being condescending or angry. As women, we have to find a way to get our points across in a different way than men, otherwise we get labelled as the "difficult one" or the "moody one," whatever that is. When you look at women who have succeeded, I don't want to say they've found a way within the system, but as of now, a majority of men are running the studio system and there are more [male] roles in films. It's inspiring to find those role models because they know their responsibility to be a role model. Even someone like Beyoncé-she uses what she has in a completely different way than, for example, I would. When I think about body image and stuff like that, first of all, her voice and gift is incredible, but she also is unapologetic when she's up there dancing in whatever she's in. It's very freeing to me. And again, with Lena Dunham, she's put her talent first and let the rest of the stuff around her fall out. Those examples are very strong women who know there's going to be a backlash, which is incredible because so many men don't have to have that backlash and don't have to deal with that. So many women are able to confront that...that's a really powerful message.

GT: Are you content with the pop/

Hollywood culture young girls are growing up with? Why or why not?

KR: What's interesting is, I look at Miley Cyrus and at first I was like, What is she doing!? This was five years ago. I was like what's with the twerking? What is that? And now, I watched her on The Voice, and she's so incredibly passionate and well-spoken and well-meaning. I saw this incredible play called Sluts. It's about how these girls in high school completely are wearing the teeny-tiny shorts and flirting with guys, and then there's this horrible incident where one of the girls is sexually assaulted. The whole discussion is about how they were walking around calling themselves sluts because they were trying to take the power back. They didn't want the boys to have that power over them, until this came about and all the girls turned on her. Everyone loved Miley when so pure and doing this one thing, and there was this Annie Leibovitz shot of her where she looked somewhat sexual. She was young, this was going out, and it was like, How was she going to be perceived? So I think that if we can look at other women from a non judgemental point of view and see what their message is, and maybe she had to go so far to the other side with the twerking and all of that in order to have her voice heard because the media pinned her into some other voice she felt she wasn't.



I think pop culture, in a way, has to be taken with a grain of salt and we have to look beyond it. That's important for your generation of women-to look at what is out there, and then have the dialogue of what it really means. I don't have girls so I don't know what you guys are having to navigate through, but I think pop culture is now more the pressures that you guys are dealing with, like with having social media access. I think women your age now growing up have a voice for that dialogue whereas that being objectified was much more hidden in a way before. It's so over-the-top, but maybe that's a great forum for discussion and because there's so many different types, hopefully you don't feel the pressure to have to conform. It's a lot to take in. For me, what I find upsetting is the access to it. The fact that my teenager and 9-year-old son can go on and see things that I find that part of life beautiful and I don't want to be objectified-it's almost desensitized. I think that's a generational thing of having to have discussions about that. Pop culture is always a hot point of generations, but maybe that's what inspires movements in each generation. There's heroes to be had in this pop culture, and there's people who you really dislike. At least this generation there's room in this power that women have really succeeded in having their own specific voice. Jennifer Lawrence has a big, bold voice, and she's able to share it loudly. She trips up the red carpet-no other woman has been able to do that and she's unapologetic about it. That's really cool. Jennifer Lawrence also wrote an essay/letter on the pay gap between men and women-she is a great role model of using her voice to make a difference and to inspire change towards equality.

GT: Are there any specific types of roles that you usually look for? Is there anything you look for in a female character you are considering to play?

KR: I tend to play super strong, smart, complicated women. I find that people are surprised when they meet me and I'm funny and kooky and that's also a stereotype in women. If you are smart

and strong, then you're only one way. I don't think men get that-you see men transitioning so easily. If you're smart, people think oh, that woman's too strong. My sister's a professor, and we were talking about how it is in the work force. That's a dialogue women, whether it's with your professor, or in class, or your producer. Wouldn't it be great if we could get to the point where we could get to a place where we could be outspoken and strong and we don't have to find a way to cushion it? Women need to support other women for being smart, strong, and outspoken and not being criticized for having a voice. That goes to what I was saying about the roles-I find complicated, multi layered women the most interesting to play, if you look at my role on *24* and *Grey's*. What I love about *Grey's* is that everyone's really smart on that show. I do see a change-we don't have to explain that a woman is a surgeon or a chief of surgery or a great doctor. That's really exciting to me.

GT: Right-that leads into the next question. What do you hope to see in the future with feminism in the media in general?

KR: I'd love to see equal pay. I'd love to see more women's roles that are as interesting as some of the men's roles-not just the girlfriend, or the wife, but as multilayered as some of the men's roles. I'd like to see more people taking risks-and I wish I didn't have to use that word "risks." You see people like Elizabeth Banks, who's like, I'm gonna direct, and I'm gonna write. Look at Tina Fey, and Amy Poehler. There's huge progress, I just wish it was faster and more.

GT: What would you want to tell your younger teenage self?

KR: I'd want to tell my younger teenage self that I don't need to find my way to maneuver through all those uncomfortable situations as woman, but at the same time, as a teenager they existed. So, I had to find that way to make my path. I wish we could set that tone for future generations so the navigating doesn't have to exist.



WOMEN IN HIP-HOP MUSIC

by *Charlotte Kramon*, OAKWOOD SECONDARY SCHOOL

On December 8th, 2016, the number 1 song on the Billboard Hot 100 chart is Black Beatles. Among the other top 15 were Caroline, Side to Side, and Broccoli. As of April 2017, a few of the top songs are Humble, Mask Off, iSpy. If you're like me, you probably know the lyrics to Caroline or Mask Off by heart. My close friend and I went through a brief phase where we would literally walk around school and randomly start singing Caroline. But when I would get to the lyric describing a woman as a "thing" "thick as f**ck," and a vast majority of the lyrics in the song, I would not only feel like an absolute hypocrite as a feminist, but I'd also be incredibly frustrated with the way my body and all women's bodies were being perceived and spoken about. The song "Power" by Kanye West is musical-

ly an outstanding song that my friends and I love as well-but the lyrics are nasty and quite offensive. Many other women expressed their opinions on the controversial struggle of enjoying good music that talks about women in the way that it does. I also evaluated the way women portray themselves in pop culture, and heard different voices questioning and appreciating the idea of sexual empowerment.

Hip-hop and rap is a prominent part of many people's daily lives. A huge amount of people from different backgrounds and communities listen to it on a daily basis, because a lot of it is really good music. But many become conflicted and frustrated when women's bodies are objectified and every lyric portrays women as being mere toys. Zelda Barnz, age 15, who listens

to rap often, explains, "Rap artists are constantly talking about women, using words like 'tits', 'ass', 'pussy', and many others. They call women 'hot' and 'sexy' instead of 'intelligent' or 'beautiful.'" This is something that has been going on for a long time, and comes up in every song.

It's a dangerous rhetoric that spreads and doesn't stop, and it makes women question the way men look at us. Zelda brings up a fantastic point-these songs look for the wrong characteristics in women. Women are awesome, intelligent, and capable human beings, and that's the way we should be spoken about. We should not be evaluated on whether or not we are "sexy." We've been fighting for empowerment and rights, and although we have a lot of work to do, we've made great progress.



But to think that some men look at us as mere objects would be incredibly disappointing, and it's hard not to feel that way whenever we listen to music

They call women 'hot' and 'sexy' instead of 'intelligent' or 'beautiful.'"

we love.

However, it can be perceived that female artists are sometimes welcoming this talk; this rhetoric. (Not that this makes the language used in rap any less disgusting.) When we see singers acting sexual in music videos and talking about themselves in ways that are sometimes similar to the way we are talked about in rap, some people think that's not helping the situation. Many singers such as Beyoncé are becoming important parts of today's feminist movement, and she is a major influencer of today's pop culture and the young generation.

One woman says that although many artists such as Beyoncé intend to promote empowerment, they may have the opposite effect on young girls, and says, "The problem is what they are really doing is perpetuating the notion that women's bodies are to be ogled and objectified when all we see are the same skimpy outfits and skinny bodies...when they are influencing young women to dress like this, those young women don't have the power or influence to be insulated or protected from the sexist behavior." Zelda's opinion, however, contradicts this. She says of Beyoncé, "People seem to think that she sexualizes herself because she wears pretty revealing clothing, but she has an incredible body that she deserves to flaunt without the sexualization of men or the judgement of others.

All women have beautiful bodies, and all women should be able to wear clothes that show and complement that. Women should not be forced to hide their bodies whether or not they 'distract men.' I think Beyoncé and other artists like her are only showing that they are powerful enough to stand up to

men who make derogatory comments about women by wearing clothes that make a statement."

Seeing powerful women like Beyoncé continue to hold their heads high is essential in today's day and age with the mass amount of catcalling that occurs in the music many of us listen to on a daily basis. Maddie Blush, age 14, says, "Her outfits definitely can be looked at in different perspectives. She is showing that women can wear whatever they want and should not take judgements with ease but on the other hand she shows a lot of skin and that can come across as offensive to many." Maddie, however, does not find her outfits offensive.

I think there's also an important question as to whether or not female artists who dress and act overly sexual, such as Ariana Grande or Nicki Minaj in music videos like Side-to-Side, are helping the situation or progress with female empowerment.

The idea of sexual empowerment vs. sexual objectification can get mixed up and messy. "I think women can make it seem like it's ok to objectify women by like shaking their asses or making themselves seem submissive, but that's not the message they're trying to send out," Wilder, age 15, says. However, although they may unintentionally perpetuate objectification sometimes, Wilder believes that "it's totally men who objectify women." As we can see, there are clearly arguments for both sides. But to go back to the Side-to-Side video, I find it difficult not to watch that and feel like Nicki Minaj and some of the things Ariana Grande says and does also portray themselves asking to be looked at as sex toys and be judged based on their sexiness, just like the way we hate being spoken about in rap music.

"What they are really doing is perpetuating the notion that women's bodies are to be ogled and objectified."

Many people think these lyrics seem

to be swooping down to the same level as the lyrics that are complained about in rap music. Especially if we focus on just Nicki Minaj, they way she generally acts and portrays women is in my opinion demeaning, offensive, and harmful, especially when we think of you girls and girls my age and younger watching women like her accept our bodies as objects.

I'd hate to think that my little sister thinks that's what she has to be to gain men's attention. We can also bring this back to Beyoncé. I absolutely adore her and I feel incredibly empowered by her newer videos such as Formation and Sorry, but I don't see how videos such as Partition do anything but contribute to the stereotype that women should be looked at for their bodies and their bodies are only objects for sex, and again, the fact that young girls can be exposed to this by the click of a youtube video is also concerning.

But, referring to the lyrics in songs like these, Zelda brings up a good point and asks, "Why is it so scandalous for a woman to write and make art about sex? Men write incredibly derogatory things about having sex with women and those songs top the charts, but women are supposed to be quiet and sing about innocent love?"

I think somewhat of a balance can be achieved regarding this debate. Obviously, women (and men) don't have to only sing about "innocent love" all the time. The mere action of singing about sex is completely fine. That isn't what bothers me at all and I don't think it's what bothers most people.

What bothers people seems to be the catcalling and graphic discourse used to talk about women and the extreme language that is the only language used to talk about sex and women in songs.

Relationships and sex become completely desensitized. It's lyrics such as "bad b***ches is the only thing that I like" that upset people. When rappers talk about sex and say things like "baby give me kitty kitty", (and this lyric isn't that bad compared to other songs,) that's not just talking about sex,

that's outright talking about women as objects. And like I said, I listen to plenty of songs with lyrics like the ones

I brought up on a daily basis, I know quite a few by heart, and many people would probably call me very hypocritical for that. So, nobody is trying to shame people for listening to the music we all listen to. It's just important to be aware of the fact that the language used can easily become dangerous and is an offensive and nasty way to portray women.

Women and men need to continue advocating for female empowerment and fighting the rhetoric that women's bodies are objects, because we are anything but objects. The dangers

and problems with these lyrics need to stay relevant conversations-and the good news is, this topic has become so much more relevant than it was years ago. When the world was first exposed to lyrics similar to the ones we hear today, people would listen to them without questioning or thinking about the controversial content of the music. There was no awareness or discussion around the issue. I was able to reach out to people around me and gather so many opinions from people who listen to the music that contains the problems of objectification.

Yet, they are still outraged at the lyrics and are willing to be active. And as for the controversial videos from female

artists, we need to focus on the women who we find empowering. Despite my discontent with a couple of her older videos, I absolutely love Beyoncé and when I watch videos like "Formation" and "Sorry" I feel immediately empowered. Also, there are SO many artists that aren't mainstream. Find other music with deeper messages and listen to that as well as the music we all enjoy now.

We don't have to only listen to one kind of music because there's a lot of great music out there that isn't offensive. Being aware, speaking out, and focusing on respecting women's bodies and empowerment in general are the prerequisites to change.



UNIFORMS AND SEXUALIZATION IN THE MEDIA

by *Zelda Barnz*, OAKWOOD SECONDARY SCHOOL

I recently went to New York City for Christmas, and walking around in twenty degree weather does not leave much room for showing skin. Even clothed in jeans, multiple coats, rain boots, gloves and a hat, young men yelled comments about my body (which they couldn't even remotely see). A boy who was probably younger than I am asked for my number. Walking through the streets of any big city as a teenage girl has its obvious dangers, and catcalling is an average, minor and even frequent occurrence, no matter where one lives.

People have a lot of theories on why this is, "boys will be boys" among the most common of them (though also possibly among the most sexist). These dangers are part of the reason why dress codes and conservative outfits are forced upon young girls, teaching us that our bodies must be hidden or we are automatically promiscuous. These dress codes are pointless and unhelpful—rapists rape people, not outfits. Skirts that reach beyond the knees are not going to protect a young girl from physical endangerment.

Contradictory ideals of what women should be are constantly thrown at us in the media and in day-to-day life, and each are demeaning in their own way. In magazines, movies, social media, and other outlets of pop culture, the female body is hyper-sexualized; models are edited to be thin and have flawless skin and perfect hair (which is usually blonde—pop culture is not typically diverse in terms of race, sexual orienta-

tion, religion, or even body type). Then to make things more complicated, the other half of the world says it's wrong and immature to show off our bodies, and that when we embrace our figures we are nothing more than a distraction to our (apparently more capable) male counterparts.

Either way, women are frequently considered to be somewhat useless sex symbols, majorly because the entire world is looking through a dominant, hetero-normative male lens that was established before almost every other aspect of society. Making girls and women feel inferior and weak by controlling how we express ourselves is only perpetuating rape culture, as is sexualizing our anatomy. A lot of students and people in general believe uniforms and dress codes are equalizers. I used to think this was a fair argument—if everyone dresses the same way, there's no "odd man out". But equality and conformity are not the same thing.

The definition of conformity is "behavior in accordance with socially accepted standards or compliance with rules". Equality, in contrast, is defined as "the state of being equal in value and opportunity". The difference between the two? The idea that conformity is everyone operating under the same laws and obeying the same rules, and equality is every person having the same quantity of ways and opportunities to express themselves.

A dress code or uniform enforces the opposite of equality—it eliminates a student's freedom of expression and

puts them under demeaning rules and regulations that they must abide to. Furthermore, the notion that uniforms are equalizers is putting the entirely false concept into students' minds that in order to be equal, everyone must look the same.

A typical dress code usually involves shorts that extend past a student's fingertips and no shorter (skirts follow the same rule, but spandex must be worn beneath them), no spaghetti straps, strapless tops, or backless tops, no bare midriffs, necklines cannot expose cleavage, etcetera. Do any of these apply to boys? Do boys often wear short shorts or spaghetti straps or cropped tops? By enforcing uniforms and dress codes, administrators are not enforcing equality—they are enforcing sexism and the idea that we, as women, do not have rights to our own bodies or freedom of expression.

Men control what we wear in society—whether they want us to look sexy or cover ourselves so we aren't a "distraction", and women often assent to these expectations without a thought past "boys will be boys". If boys are allowed to be boys, shouldn't girls be allowed to be girls? We should be able to express our art, emotions, and sexuality just the way men can. Women dressing how they want without being judged should be normalized, not unusual. Especially in today's (...and the next four years') society, we need it to become clearer than ever that we adhere only to our own rules, not to the limits men set for us.

THOUGHTS ON THIRD WAVE FEMINISM

by *Matt Dederick*, *VENICE HIGH SCHOOL*

I want to open this by saying that I am not against or afraid of gender equality, nor am I even conservative. I believe that first and second wave feminism heavily benefited society. However, the most outspoken advocates of third wave feminism adhere to an ideology that is more about misandry than equality.

Third wave feminism often demonizes men and labels men as being a gender of plotters and schemers who relish oppressing women whenever they can. This has gone to the point of certain feminists calling themselves “womxn” so there is no suffix of “man”. This encourages more misandrist sentiment and is honestly just ridiculous.

Alternative viewpoints are labeled “sexist” or “misogynistic” and 3rd wave feminists often use selective data to

prove their points.

The wage gap is virtually non-existent (what gap there is can be explained by average amount of hours men work compared to the average amount of hours women work as well as men being more likely to ask for a raise) when you compare pay between men and women in the same job, and if a company WAS actually not paying a woman as much as a man, they would be breaking the law (Equal Pay Act of 1963).

Third wave feminists claim to fight for equality, but in reality, it seems that they are fighting for woman superiority over men. For a movement that claims to be fighting for men and women, they tend to ignore issues pertaining to men. The fact that men face higher rates of homelessness, depression, suicide, death on the job and the majority of the time

lose custody of their child in a divorce (even though single mothers abuse children at a higher rate than single fathers) is ignored or even silenced by most feminists. Feminist outcry against the draft only started when the draft was being proposed to be expanded to women. Feminists view any attempt by men to fix these problems as detrimental to their agenda of woman being the only gender facing gender specific problems and any attempt to fix these problems as misogynistic.

In conclusion, I want to reiterate that feminism at its roots is a great cause. First and second wave feminism made great strides to make America a better place for all people, but third wave feminism's execution is as divisive and dismissive of facts as Donald Trump.



WHY I DO NOT SUPPORT FEMINISM TODAY

by *Grace Chung*, FAITH BAPTIST HIGH SCHOOL

I am one to shake my head in disapproval of what the feminist movement has become today. Should someone ask if I supported the feminists in history, my answer would be yes, I agreed with most of what they fought for. So the question is why do I not support feminism today. The main reason is because feminists today are fighting a useless fight.

By this I mean to say that they are fighting for equality when they have already achieved it. There is no reason to keep fighting the “patriarchy.” It simply does not exist anymore.

The first issue I have is that feminism, believe it or not, pushes women to feel they are always the victim. Feminists push for this whole argument of “rape culture.” This idea is completely false, but feminists use it to further their push for women to constantly be seen as victims.

If “rape culture” were real why does everyone protect the women when she comes out to say that she has been raped? Why does everyone run to her aid without even verifying what she claims?

If “rape culture” were real then why is it that when men get accused falsely their lives are destroyed because they are forever seen as a rapist? These are the inherent flaws of something like “rape culture.”

Secondly, abortion is something feminists fight for. They march around claiming “my body, my choice!” The problem is that the fetus or baby is not your body; thus it is not a feminist’s choice to kill that fetus or baby. They claim it is a form of healthcare, but it is

not.

Doctors take the Hippocratic Oath to not be unethical in their practices, but performing abortions violates this oath. That, however, is beside the point. Abortion is the denial of equality. Fetuses are not treated with equality since they are not even considered human beings. That does not even make sense in the first place considering at one point all of us here today were just fetuses.

Lastly, the wage gap does not exist in the way feminists believe it to exist. If the wage gap were real, business owners would only hire women.

Business owners would want to make as much money as possible, so if they could just hire women and pay them less for the same amount of work then they wouldn’t they? Besides the failure in logic, there are also basic things that feminists overlook when it comes to the wage gap.

For example, men hold powerful positions more than women in fields like engineering. Of course, there will be a gap in wages when you don’t account for the job fields and the difference of gender within that field.

There would be a huge gap in engineering because it is a male dominated field. Also, many feminist forget that it is illegal to be payed less than men simply because of gender due to the Equal Pay Act of 1963. This is a lost cause to fight for simply because there is no cause to fight for anymore.

These are just some of the reasons that I do not support the third wave feminism we witness today.

I understand there are different levels of feminists regarding how active

they are, but that does not change the fact that people who label themselves feminists believe in rape culture, abortion, and the wage gap.

If feminism was not distorted than I would stand by it, but there are inherent flaws within their beliefs. Not only do the inherent flaws of feminism turn me off, but also the push to be above men which goes against their belief of equality in the first place.

If feminism was simply equality of sexes, than I would agree; but the feminism today goes beyond equality and I disagree with that movement.

The original meaning behind feminism is what I stand by. I believe women deserve respect and dignity, but I do not think that feminists accurately represent it.

The feminist movement has become an embarrassment to women who actually have respect for themselves. The movement has become disgusting to me. Women who want respect are marching with “pussy hats” and it creates political hysteria.

When women did this, it disgusted me. Feminists do not accurately portray women who have respect and dignity. They create unnecessary chaos and that is just another reason they turn women from feminism.

They push for many things, but fail to realize the hypocrisy. For example, they demand equality, but push to be above men.

Feminists demand to be treated with respect, but don’t even give themselves respect. The movement has become distorted and it truly saddens and repulses me to see this happen.

WHAT FEMINISM MEANS TO US

EUNICE

OAKWOOD SECONDARY SCHOOL

Feminism is defined as “the advocacy of women’s rights on the basis of equality of the sexes.” This seems to be a fairly straightforward definition, yet the word “feminist” continues to cause so much controversy today. Although the basic idea of feminism is equality of the sexes, applying this belief in real world has been complicated, therefore causing many to misinterpret feminism.

One issue many people have with modern feminism is the lack of representation of male issues. For example, it is true that more than one third of sexual violence victims are male, yet most media coverage centers on a male perpetrator, female victim dynamic. The same stereotype is prevalent in discussions of domestic violence. However, talking about the struggles of one group does not in any way invalidate the struggles of another.

Feminism is simply acknowledging that there has been systematic and cultural sexism against women that continues to exist today. Just because you publicize a story of a woman who suffered under inadequate sexual assault policies, does not mean you only believe that women can be raped. Likewise, just because you choose to highlight a story of a woman who is a domestic violence survivor, does not mean you are invalidating men who have suffered the same terrible actions.

Whereas many people complain about the lack of representation

of certain issues, many people criticize modern feminism for focusing too much on certain issues. Tomi Lahren, political talk show host, states “I don’t consider myself a victim, I don’t march for insignificant problems masqueraded as women’s rights while women in less fortunate parts of the world wake up without human rights.” Although it is true that women in first world countries do not experience disparities in education, social norms, and legal protection to the same level as women in third world countries, women all around the globe face valid problems. Technically, women are “guaranteed” the same legal rights as men in the US, yet women face numerous obstacles and biases that prevent the fulfillment of this guarantee. Often times, these problems cannot be numerically calculated, as it is impossible to put a clear number on the emotional effect of the lack of strong female characters in media or the culture of normalized sexual harassment. Even if feminist issues in the US and other first world countries are not as tangible as those that can easily be represented in the statistics of third world countries, all issues are very much real.

In addition, it is important to note that feminism helps everyone- all sexes included. Harmful gender roles that dictate what women should or should not do, also limit opportunities for men to express themselves. Feminism combats hypermasculinity, by disabling gender roles to give everyone the freedom to make choices. A female should have the choice to pursue traditionally “masculine” career fields as a

scientist or politician, just as how a male should feel free to pursue traditionally “feminine” career fields in beauty and caregiving. And although certain feminist issues such as birth control and girl’s education are specific to females, all issues improve the general welfare of society. For example, the Organization for Economic and Co-Operation Development estimates that every dollar spent on birth control, saves \$1.41 in medical costs. Additionally, March 2010 United Nations statement described how the key to combating global poverty is through empowering girl’s education, with every dollar invested in girl’s education contributing at least \$5 in the economy.

But I would be lying if I said that I didn’t struggle with feminism myself. I’ve always easily called myself a “feminist”, but the real challenge has always been feminism’s application to my daily life. I love countless rap and hip hop songs despite their misogynistic lyrics, and I often apply makeup in an attempt to mold myself into idealized (and unachievable) beauty standards. Am I feminist, if... is the beginning of a question I often ask myself before doing something. Yet the calculations of what is feminist enough are endless and frankly, pointless, and what I’ve come to terms with as the real life application of feminism is simply: choice.

Feminism is about choices. As it is based on the fundamental belief of equality of the sexes, all sexes should have the choice to express themselves and pursue opportunities without limitations caused by their specific

sex. Women should have the choice to regulate their own bodies, whether that means having access to safe abortion clinics or not undergoing an abortion. Teenage girls should have the choice to participate in STEM subjects without prejudice, either blind or intentional, that creates unequal opportunity. Women should have the choice to wear whatever they please, without fear that their bodies would be seen as invitations for sexual assault.

I am a feminist because I believe all sexes should have the choice to express themselves and pursue any opportunity regardless of their specific sex.

MATILDA

JOHN MARSHALL HIGH SCHOOL

I agree that a lot of the mainstream 'feminism' movement is problematic, such as the common cissexist slogans used at the women's march which equated womanhood to having a uterus or vagina. The literal definition of feminism is the belief that people of all genders should be equal socially, politically, and economically. If you believe that, you are a feminist, at least in my book. Anyone who claims that women are better than men is a misandrist.

Anyone who tries to dismiss or belittle the struggles of men, such as the pressures to conform to hypermasculinity, is just wrong. These are real issues and they absolutely need to be addressed. However, these are all feminist issues by definition as they deal with the inequalities of people based on gender. True intersectional feminism should be representative of this, and we need to work together to raise awareness about these issues and challenge the stigma. But just because you disagree with the most common connotation of the word is no reason to dismiss the movement as a whole.

CHARLOTTE

OAKWOOD SECONDARY SCHOOL

I am going to begin this little response about my belief in feminism by saying that I in no way intend to shut anybody

down, and by thanking the people shared their views contradictory to the rest of the feminist-themed articles in our magazine. As a movement, it is essential to not alienate those whose opinion differ from ours. Many experts and liberal politicians are restating that a very prominent and likely reason Trump was elected was because of the alienation of middle America, who felt shut down because of their conservative views. I have really high hopes for feminism. I want the movement to succeed. And in order for any activist movement to succeed, we cannot attempt to silence anybody. Many say that we live in desperate times in which love, kindness, and compromise is not the answer. But when we look at history's most successful movements, these values have always been the answer. Look at Martin Luther King Jr. By leading a hate-free movement, he brought America quite far in the fight for civil rights.

I understand why there are people who get frustrated with certain modern feminists. I'm not going to deny that there are people out there who aren't preaching what I believe is the correct message regarding feminism. I get furious when I see man-hating blog posts because that's not what feminism is about. These examples do not represent the movement as a whole in any way, shape, or form. The notion that feminism as a movement is exclusive is simply wrong. I'll give an example everyone can understand: Women's March. For those who didn't attend, it was not full of whining women complaining about men being evil and stripping all women of all rights. It was full of all genders, including men, coming together on a huge variety of issues concerning the recent election and telling the government what we believe and why. There was nobody complaining about men being evil, or whatever people seem to assume it is we complain about. Men were angry. Women were angry. Everyone was angry. So we channeled that anger into PEACEFUL expression. That's what feminism should be, and frankly, exactly it usually is. I was at an event today about activism or-

ganized by a feminist organization, and I'd say there was a pretty even number of men and women. One of the guest speakers was Kirby Dick, a male who made a film about the reality of sexual assault on campuses and is dedicated to addressing the issues of rape culture and assault. If anyone who claims that feminist as a whole is a "man-hating," my response is that I understand where this idea comes from, but that it is a factually untrue statement.

To those that say the patriarchy and the wage gap is a myth, I have a few responses. First of all, the wage gap is not a myth regardless of the Equal Pay Act, and I'll refute this briefly. Just a year out of college, women are already at a 6.6% disadvantage when it comes to pay, and research leads to the conclusion that a big part of this has to do with the anticipation of motherhood.

I'd also like to bring up one of the countless stories that prove the wage gap true. I'm not going to go into detail out of respect for her privacy, but I know an incredible woman who is one of the only women as an executive in her field of work and her success is beyond inspiring.

However, after moving to a new company and starting a new project with a male partner who she had the exact same position as, (both held the highest executive positions,) she was offered a significantly smaller salary, and the men and women around her admitted immediately that this had to do with the fact that she is a woman. She is in the process of fighting this unequal offer. But the wage gap is a reality.

I was originally drawn to feminism by the speaker and author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. Her TEDtalks, especially We Should All Be Feminists, really impacted my thought processes on feminism and sparked my passion for gender equality. I could speak about feminism for countless pages, so I'm going to keep my words brief.

First of all, the TEDtalk I just mentioned was distributed to every 16-year-old in Sweden and a lot of the feedback was from males saying how they learned that feminism doesn't promote male

hatred and about how and why males could be feminists. One thing Adichie often feels in her fight for feminism is loneliness. And I feel this sometimes, too. People use the amazing, inspiring success stories of powerful women as excuses to deny the fact that women and femininity are not viewed as equal. Here are just a few simple examples about perception to add onto what I've already said.

In schools, boys often see girls who participate in class as annoying or in a negative light. This is a real thing. I know multiple girls who were told

by boys that they would be attracted to

them if they didn't speak their mind so much.

Not only does that happen in schools, but it happens in the workforce. Adichie brought up countless examples of women who try to speak up in business meetings and are shut down as their male counterparts say literally exactly the same thing. Overall, it is harder for a business woman to succeed than a man because of unequal perception. And, there are far, far less women CEOs than men.

Why do women feel the need to dress in ugly man-ish suits to be taken seriously? Adichie was talking about how she feels most confident in frilly skirts and lip gloss and heels, but once was afraid of teaching in such attire because she wanted to be taken seriously.

Refer to my interview with Grey's Anatomy actress Kim Raver. Men's roles are still of larger numbers and they portray very different characters

than women's roles. Or look at Billboards when you're driving down the street and think about the types of characters that women are playing vs men.

Women are frequently looked at for their bodies and appearances rather than character. This is such a massive problem and so relevant. I talked about this in my article about Hip-hop, but it happens in everyday life as well. Women are catcalled because they're working out and want to wear leggings.

Then, of course, there's the inequality with sexual assault and abortion. Look at Trumpcare, which contains so many harmful reforms and messages such as a 6-week paid maternity leave. Some argue that it essentially makes being a woman a pre-existing condition. I've been tempted to be less outspoken because of negative responses or for fear of seeming perceived as obnoxious.

On an international level, women across the world are denied the right to education and are oppressed in intense ways. I can go on. But the patriarchy still exists. That's why I co-run this magazine and project. I see inequality, and I want to change it. I can go on.

So yes, I'm a passionate feminist. And no, I don't agree with a lot of what Matt and Grace said. But I want to bring this back to my first few sentences in this article.

Matt and Grace have valid opinions, and there are people out there who would unfortunately criticize them in unfair and shameful ways. I ask everyone out there, feminists, activists, liberals, and conservative to respect the other side. I ask everyone to listen and engage but not interrupt or shut anyone down. Don't call the other side liars. Don't call the other side names.

That will just yield us to more politicians in the vein of Trump. That being said, I also call on both women and men to be aware of the role gender plays in society and work towards improving the way gender is perceived.

