

The Continuity and Change of the Female Landscape

Emily Janzen

Women's suffrage movements sparked incredible change and growth for our world's female population. Women have become empowered in their homes, the workplace and in politics, but for every great leap there is another yet to be surmounted. These movements are an excellent case study for the aspects of women's lives that have changed over the years along with the continuities. For example, the action of men insulting women, once commonplace, is now considered highly inappropriate. During the early 1900s, postcards and political cartoons degrading women activists were seen as funny and topical. As seen on Saturday Night Live's use of the phrase "Jane, you ignorant slut" (Aykroyd, 00:01:08), offensive remarks against women from males could be said without scrutiny late into the century. Things have changed in modern day however. There have been countless instances of men displaying sexism and being harshly berated, such as the example of Billionaire Ken Fisher losing one billion dollars in investments due to provocative remarks about "trying to get into a girls pants" (Kelly, para. 1).

Despite backlash against sexism being at an all time high, this, as is the case historically, does not prevent some men from retaliating. To defer outward conflict this is often done through the lens of humour. Many of the comics and postcards which aimed to degrade suffragists added an element of humour to lighten the mood. This has not changed much today with men such as Donald Trump using humour to dismiss the concerns of women. For example, he joked on Twitter that "26,000 unreported sexual assaults [sic] in the military-only 238 convictions. What did these

geniuses expect when they put men & women together?" to get around having to take the issue seriously.

Another continuity is found in women needing to fight for their rights. In the early 1900s, women in the United States, Canada and Britain alike had to march, lecture, hold events and petition indefatigably for the right to vote, battling against waves of male prejudice and scorn. They may now hold this right, but other wars are still being waged, a strong example being abortion access. Organization Planned Parenthood states on their issues page that in 2011, "anti-abortion politicians made massive gains in federal and state elections. Since then, challenges to safe, legal abortion have mounted at a rapid clip. In some places, abortion restrictions have in fact made abortion harder to access."

With issues such as abortion surfacing, change has come to feminist movements in the form of focus. According to Encyclopedia Britannica, "the first-wave feminism of the 19th and early 20th centuries focused on women's legal rights, especially the right to vote" (Burkett, para. 1). Now however, feminists have expanded their activism, according to feminist.com, to areas such as "women's issues, health, anti-violence resources, grassroots activism, women's businesses, and pretty much anything that could possibly support a world where men and women are allied, empowered and equal." (Schnall, para. 1).

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