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We Should All Be Feminists Connection Paper

Citlaly Torres
Butler University

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Citlaly Torres

We Should All Be Feminists Connection Paper

In “*We Should All Be Feminists*”, Adichie gives her definition of what it means to be a feminist in the 21st century. In the book Adichie writes: “Culture does not make people. People make culture. If it is true that full humanity of women is not our culture, then we can and must make it our culture” (32), this is saying that it is up to people what is seen as culture. The culture shouldn’t influence people, it should be vice-versa. The topic of feminists and feminism is something that has become more prevalent in our culture in recent years. With women like Malala making a change and celebrities who are using their platform to contribute to the movement, awareness is being spread and people are being educated. It is now easier than ever to reach larger audiences with the technology present today. The “Me Too” movement began with a tweet and is now recognized worldwide.

The origin of the “Me Too” movement was in 2006, as a way of helping survivors of sexual violence, most commonly minorities and people with a low standard of living. However, the movement wasn’t recognized as it is now until 2017. The movement gained recognition when a tweet by actress Alyssa Milano goes viral, in her tweet Milano said, “If you’ve been sexually harassed or assaulted, write ‘me too’.” After that tweet the #MeToo began to circulate on all social medias and make headlines. The hashtag was recognized by many celebrities which further spread the movement. The use of the hashtag by celebrities made the movement helped incorporate it more into the current culture. A large part of the culture in the United States and likely in other parts of the world is based on celebrities. People often go based off what celebrities like, are wearing, and doing to make their own choices. The simple fact alone that

celebrities were participating in the hashtag made it something that people paid attention to as opposed to simply overlooking it.

The movement brought down over 200 men in different fields (Carlsen). Over 50 of them were replaced by women (Carlsen). The fact that celebrities and political figures were called out led to a rise in sexual harassment complaints in the United States in HR departments. This further proves the point that the culture is led by celebrities and they are a large part of helping make a change. There was a 12% increase in reports of sexual harassment within a year of the 'Me Too' movement (Chiwaya). Not only did reports increase but, so did visits to the EEOC's (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission) sexual harassment webpage (Chiwaya). There has also been a rise in the number of phone calls made to sexual-assault hotlines. There were reported to be a spike in calls whenever someone of high profile is making headlines for sexual assault (Chiwaya). This information showcases how common this is in everyday life. It isn't something that happens only on Hollywood sets, it happens every day to regular people. Something that is disturbing is how common it happens on college campuses. There have been multiple unfair cases of women who are raped on campus and the school chooses to do nothing or close to nothing about it. Although progress has been made, such as there still has not been enough progress and there is a lot of room for growth.

Although the United States was affected, the 'Me Too' movement also made headlines in different parts of the world including Paris, Seoul, Toronto, and many more (Adam). In South Korea, a governor who was also a presidential contender resigned after he was accused of raping his secretary during business trips (Adam). In Israel, the Prime Minister's spokesman resigned after being accused of sexual assault by Julia Salazar a New York City politician (Adams). It is

interesting to see how this is having a large impact even in countries where it may have taken awhile for women to even have rights in the first place. Such as in Nigeria, where in 2015 they only had 18 rape convictions since their independence as a country (Stone). When a student who was given the choice by a professor to either fail or sleep with him recorded this and got the professor suspended. This sparked the conversation of academic harassment in Nigeria (Stone).

In France, catcalling and verbal harassment were banned in the streets. However, that led to a lot of backlash and people questioning if the movement was being taken too far. It is a bit shocking to note that some of the people questioning if it is being taken too far are women who are writers, actresses, and academics. This is like giving people the green light to openly talk about their dislike of the movement. As mentioned before, people follow what celebrities do or often look at their actions for approval. By seeing people who are known bashing the movement, that makes people feel entitled to not only give their criticism, but also to belittle people who are followers of 'Me Too'.

If Alyssa Milano had never written that tweet, who knows how many men and women would have stayed silent? In a way, Alyssa Milano can be a reference to Gandhi's quote, "You must be the change you want to see in the world." Milano shook the world with one tweet which was the start of a revolution that is now present all around the world. Thanks to her tweet, justice was served for lots of victims. Milano's tweet gave many victims the courage that they needed in order to be able to share their story. Although the movement has died down a bit, it was a great portrayal of the fact that like Adichie said, "People make culture." Before this, sexual assault was not something that was heavily discussed or mentioned in the media. As time passes, the concept of sexual harassment is becoming more prevalent in the culture. This isn't the first-time

celebrities speaking up raises awareness and educated people on what is going on in the world. Some of the same occurrences happened with the 'Black Lives Matter' movement. Celebrities such as Beyonce, Jay Z, and Carmelo Anthony have been known for supporting Black Lives Matter. They show their support by raising awareness and using their platform to educate people. Jay Z released a song about the danger black people faced by the police. At the end of the day, the type of people that are present in society are what make up the culture present. If you want change you must be a part of the change.

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