



Fighting for Feminism

Do we still need feminism or is it a problem from the last century?

Report by Brannel School Students, Year 10

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In September 2014 British actor Emma Watson gave a thought-provoking speech about gender inequality and how to fight it. The campaign she launched, HeForShe, invokes men to fight for feminism.

“Fighting for women’s rights has too often become synonymous with man-hating,” Ms Watson said. “If there is one thing I know for certain, it is that this has to stop... no country in the world can yet say that they have achieved gender equality.” Watson continues “Statesman Edmund Burke said that, “All it takes for the forces of evil to triumph is for good men and women to do nothing.” ...And if not me, who? And if not now, when?”

We strongly agree with Emma Watson because we think that no one should have better or worse chances in life because of what sex they are. Many people, especially men, are not aware that gender equality still exists in highly developed countries like Great Britain. However, it is still an issue as evidenced by the reaction to Ms Watson’s speech: there was hardly anything that hasn’t been criticised about her personally or her speech.

Emma’s highly feminine appearance, her nervous delivery and her heterosexuality were criticised the most. She is a young, middle-class, white English woman. Many people said that a black woman should be the U.N. ambassador because they have even more issues, but we don’t think that the nationality of the spokesperson should have an impact on the message.

“All I know is that I care about this problem, and I want to make it better,” Watson says. “I’m also against racism, and homophobia, and classism, and xenophobia, and all of it. My specific mandate is to advocate for women and girls. I’m the U.N. ambassador for women so I’m here to do that.”

So why hate on Emma Watson for trying to bring the message across?

Emma Watson reported that within less than 12 hours of making her speech she was receiving threats. A group of anonymous individuals threatened to publish nude photos of her in a few days. Internet trolls hosted a website with a picture of Emma Watson and a countdown underneath it.

Emma Watson herself said: “A lot of people that were close to me knew about gender equality but didn’t think it was that urgent. We live in Great Britain - this is a thing of the past, oppression of women. When they saw that the minute I stepped up and talked about women’s rights I was immediately threatened... I think they were really shocked.”

The internet trolls are picking a certain way of intimidation to gain power over women. That Emma was threatened with her naked body shows again that society still objectifies women. We don’t think this is acceptable.

Isn’t this the proof that we really need feminism and it’s not a problem from the last century?

Some people also said that there is no reason for men to be involved in feminism. If you ask us, there are lots of reasons why they *must* be involved. When girls wear boy clothes nobody really cares, but as soon as a guy wears girl clothes he gets insulted. Why? Because society thinks it’s degrading to be a woman. When a guy cries, he is told to “man up”, because showing feelings should be left to the women as it shows weakness.

And how exactly do you expect to improve those things with “men’s rights”? So instead of saying “man up”, say “have courage and be strong”, because not only men should do that. Instead of saying “act like a lady”, say “be polite and respectful”, because that’s not a thing only women should do. Positive character traits shouldn’t be fixed on a gender.