

What White Feminism Gets Wrong

BEING INTENTIONAL ABOUT INTERSECTIONALITY

Tiesha Shankin | Sharalle Arnold | Jennifer Palm | Suzy Herman | Ashley McCarter | Dionna Cheatham



Ground Rules

- **Speaking from our two perspectives** – African American (Black) and Caucasian (White)
 - Cannot speak for those that are not represented by the group (key)
- **Purpose is not intended to offend or point blame – but to learn/grow**
- **Acknowledge the diversity of the feminist thought**
- **Accept that feminist movements have made many beneficial societal contributions**
 - These movements have made improvements for society and individual women
 - Not about if feminism as a whole is good or not but how to improve feminism

Ground Rules, cont.

- **Listen to understand** – not just to gather ammunition
 - Opinions are not right or wrong – rather different
 - Try not to make assumptions – no two individuals think alike
 - Listen and speak with the same respect you personally like shown to you
 - Try not to interrupt each other when speaking – respect
- **We will try to use evidence and/or examples**
- **Maintain confidentiality**
 - Try not to use names/specific places/etc
- **“Ouch” and “Oops”**
 - If someone says something that offends you, say “Ouch.” This allows the other person to say, “Oops!” Then we can educate them on why what they said could come across offensive.

***What is the definition
of feminism?***

As defined by bell hooks:

**feminism is the
struggle against
sexist oppression.**

Review of **Feminism**

- Various types
- Questions emerge
- Thinking intersectionality

When considering the exclusive nature of feminism...

“Part of the problem with Western feminists, I find, is that they take after their brothers and their fathers. And that’s a real problem.”

-Alice Walker

Feminism and Intersectionality

**Examples of
White Feminism
in Modern Culture**



The Real First Family

Controversy or Praise?

This Adorable Photo Of A Graduating University Student Breastfeeding Is Going Viral

Definitive proof that women are the greatest.

Posted on Nov. 4, 2014, at 12:30 a.m.



Simon Crerar
BuzzFeed Staff



Breast-feeding mom's college graduation photo stirs controversy



Lisa Flam
TODAY

June 9, 2014 at 4:29 PM ET



Serena Williams



[VIDEO](#)

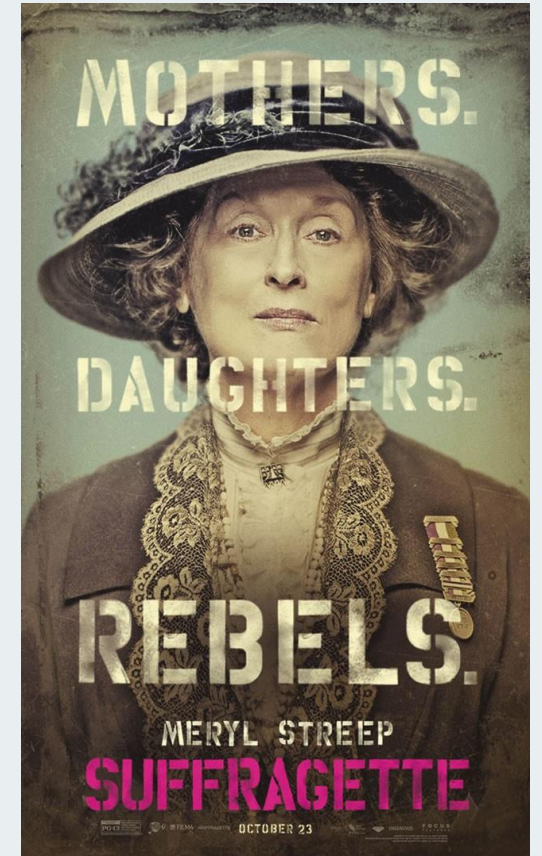
Kelly Osbourne

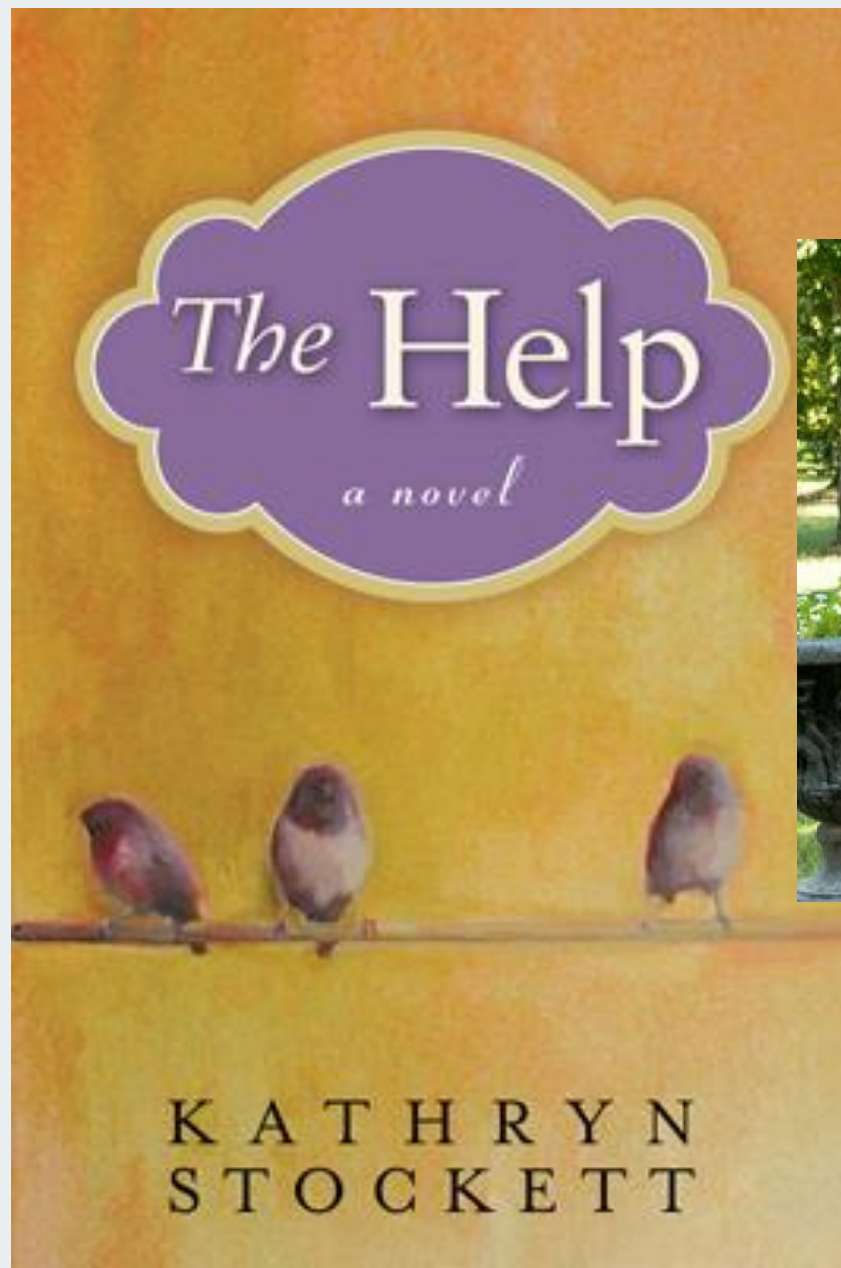
“If you kick every Latino out of this country, then who is going to be cleaning your toilet, Donald Trump?”



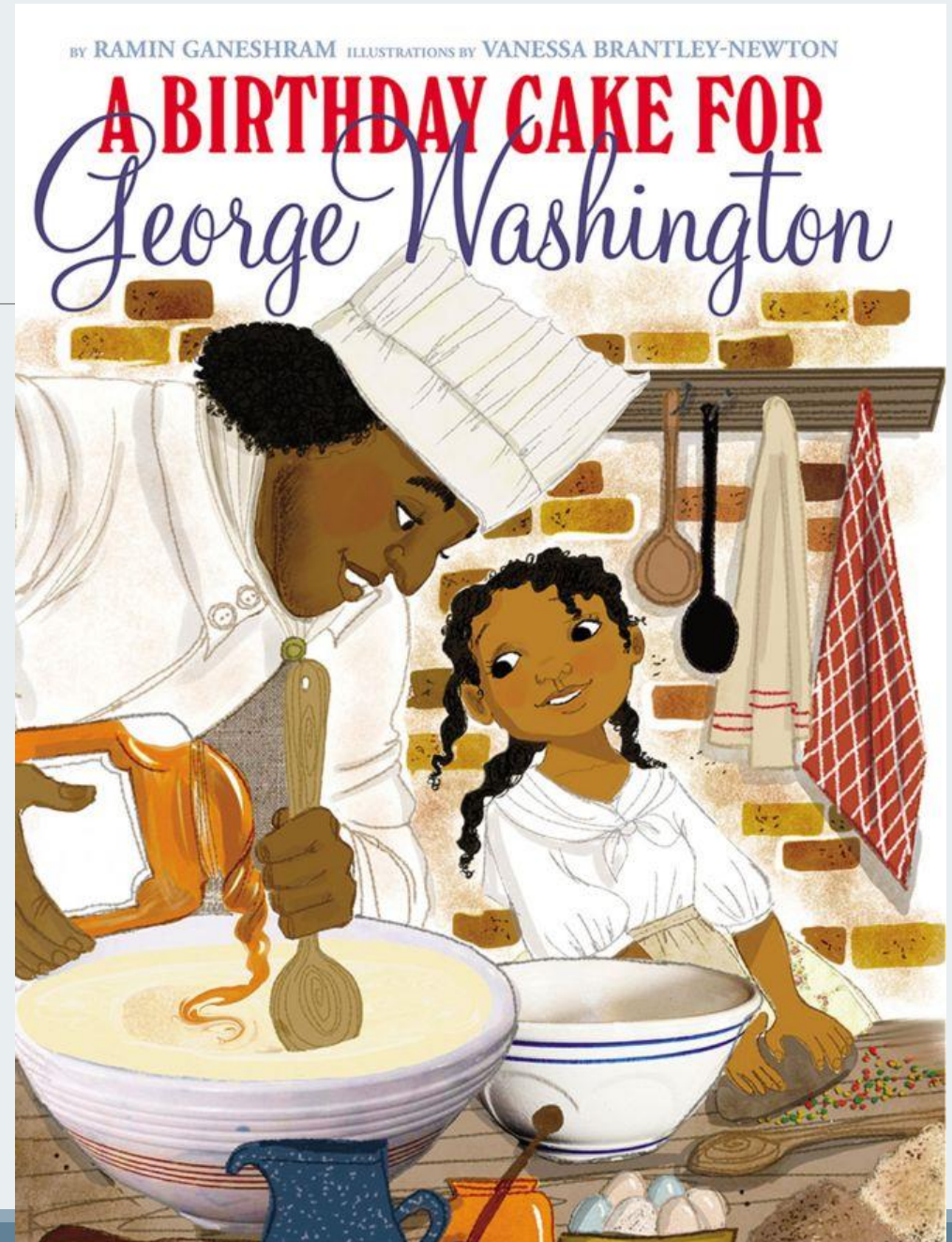


Meryl Streep





In children's media...



Lean In

Sheryl Sandberg

It was a watershed moment for me. A moment when I witnessed an internal barrier altering women's behavior. A moment when I realized that in addition to facing institutional obstacles, women face a battle from within. We consistently underestimate ourselves. Multiple studies in multiple industries show that women often judge their own performance as worse than it actually is, while men judge their own performance as better than it actually is.

We hold ourselves back in ways both big and small, by lacking self-confidence, by not raising our hands, and by pulling back when we should be leaning in. We internalize the negative messages we get throughout our lives--the messages that say it's wrong to be outspoken, aggressive, or more powerful than men. We lower our own expectations of what we can achieve. We continue to do the majority of the housework and child care. We compromise our career goals to make room for partners and children who may not even exist yet. Compared to our male colleagues, fewer of us aspire to senior positions.

Internal obstacles are rarely discussed and often underplayed. Throughout my life, I was told over and over about inequalities in the workplace and how hard it would be to have a career and a family. I rarely, however, heard anything about the ways I might hold myself back. These internal obstacles deserve a lot more attention because they are under our control. We cannot change what we are unaware of, and once we are aware, we cannot help but change.

I know that in order to continue to grow and challenge myself, I have to believe in my own abilities. I still face situations that I fear are beyond my qualifications. And I still sometimes find myself spoken over and discounted while men sitting next to me are not. But now I know how to take a deep breath and keep my hand up. I have learned to sit at the table.

We Can Do It!



J. Flannery

POST FEB. 15 TO FEB. 28



WAR PRODUCTION CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

We All Can Do It!

soirart.tumblr



Feminism is worthless without intersectionality and inclusion.



Intersectionality

The theory that explains how an individual can experience multiple forms of oppression at one time.

Because of multiple identities in various oppressed groups one could experience, racism, while facing homophobia and ableism.

Intersectionality and **Feminism**

Laci Green and Franchesca Ramsey
share their thoughts.

Accountability Measures

1. Active Oppression

- Laughing at or telling jokes about others.

2. Indifference & Ignorance

- Laughing at or telling jokes about others.

3. Oppression Through Lack of Action

- If you here a friend telling a demeaning joke recognizing it as oppressive, not laughing at this joke but not saying anything to your friend.

Accountability Measures

4. Confronting Oppression

- Be aware of and confront statements such as “I am not prejudice, but . . .”

5. Growing as an Ally

- Educate yourself; don't rely on marginalized people to be the experts.

6. Becoming Active as an Ally

- Be “out” and public about your support for individuals and issues.

7. Challenging Systems

Change discriminatory institutional practices. Identify and work to change such practices. i.e. diversity of professors, etc.

Be an Ally

Once you have become an ally,
you now have the power to educate and
teach others what you know.

After all, what good is knowledge if it is not
shared?

What Kind Of An Ally Are You?

On Campus Resources

Women's Center (gvsu.edu/women_cen)

Multicultural Affairs Office (gvsu.edu/oma)

Milton E. Ford LGBT Resource Center (gvsu.edu/lgbtrc)

Office of Student Life (gvsu.edu/studentlife)

Area Studies Department (gvsu.edu/areastudies)

Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies Department (gvsu.edu/wgs)

Intersections Initiative (gvsu.edu/intersections)

Online Resources

Black Girl Dangerous: www.blackgirldangerous.org

Shakesville: www.shakesville.com

MTV News – Decoded (YouTube Channel)

Everyday Feminism: www.everydayfeminism.com

For resources and references from this presentation, go to:
www.gvsu.edu/wcommission/teachin or www.gvsu.edu/pbw

Action Items and Small Steps

- Start conversations with others and embrace having difficult dialogues
- Read articles, blogs, books, and other materials related to intersectionality and related topics
- Seek out new opportunities such as student groups, campus events, and meeting new people
- Purposely analyze and dissect media content
- Think about inclusion in broad terms and how you can be more inclusive in daily life
- Evaluate your personal intersections as well as your personal privileges
- Be intentional in your actions and your role as an ally, especially related to social justice and oppression

Being Mindful

- Every person is at a different stage in their personal learning/person journey
- Be open to critique (that is courteous)
- Challenge others in a respectful manner
- Own your mistakes and apologize if needed
- People and circumstances cannot always change immediately
- Oppression is exhausting and those who are oppressed are not responsible for all social justice

Final Considerations

Is your personal definition of feminism inclusive? Is it intersectional?

How could you change your definition of feminism to be more intersectional?

Are there individuals you are willing to include in your feminism who you are not currently including?

Questions and Comments

Thank you!
