**Unit Essay 3**

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**In this revision, I added to my APA formatting and checked for grammatical and spelling errors. I also added how their contributions illustrate feminism to make my argument stronger for question two as advised by Professor Grether. For question three, I tried to make it sound more formal because that’s the type of writing I needed to use for this paper and to me it didn’t sound as formal as it should be.**

Feminism came in many waves, with each wave focusing on what was happening in society at the time for women. The first wave of feminism was from 1848 to 1920. This was the earliest period of feminism, which was the result of the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention. This convention called for equal rights for women to vote and own property, full access to educational opportunities, and equal compensation (Allan & Daynes, 2017). The second wave of feminism was also known as the “Women’s Liberation Movement”. This wave started in the 1960s and lasted through the 1980s. The Women’s Liberation Movement was associated with the issues of pay equity, equal access to jobs and higher education, and the control over their body’s, which included sexuality, rape, and reproductive rights (Allan & Daynes, 2017). The third wave of feminism emerged in the 1990s and lasted until the 2010s. This wave of feminism focused on the issues of diversity and the many different identities women could label themselves as. This wave also addressed past inequalities within feminist movements. Some key issues from the movement included sexuality, sexual harassment, and patriarchy. Today, we are in the fourth wave of feminism. While hard to define as of right now, the key issues in this wave are media, the division of domestic labor, the glass ceiling, and violence against women (Rhiannon, 2021). Most of these topics still have not been resolved, and feminists still feminists still face the same challenges today as they did years before.

Some theorists who utilize this theoretical tradition are Jane Addams, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and Harriet Martineau. These women made major contributions to feminism, from suffrage to gender inequality. Jane Addams established Hull House, which was a house dedicated to immigrants, young women, and some men. She believed in a gendered standpoint, which means she brings a women’s consciousness into her analyses. Along with this, she focused on women’s lives and work, whether they were factory workers or housewives. Addams also invented a research method that would be described as “mutuality of recognition” by contemporary feminist researchers (L&N, 2007). Addams’ contributions illustrate feminism because her work focused on women and where they were in society. Hull House was centered around community and togetherness for immigrants and women. This house provided people with a place to live, eat, communicate, and, most importantly, learn. The full right to education was something that feminists were advocating for at the time this house was established, and something that feminists would still be fighting for later in history.

Charlotte Perkins Gilman advocated for women’s economic independence to achieve true equality with men (*Charlotte Perkins Gilman*, n.d.). She is well known for her short story, “The Yellow Wallpaper”, which describes a woman who suffers from a mental breakdown after giving birth. This story “invites us to reconsider gender dynamics” along with mental health disorders in women (CrashCourse, 2018). From Gilman’s story, the woman suffering from mental illness wanted the wallpaper in her room changed, but her husband denied her request, making her bound to this repulsive wallpaper covering the room. Perkins’s short story illustrates feminism because the woman in the story had very little autonomy in her life, and the wallpaper was a symbol of the patriarchal society that she’s trapped in (Crowder, 2023). This book also illustrates the constraints placed on women in the 19th century.

Lastly, Harriet Martineau used feminism to understand and transform inequalities between men and women. From her studies, she created four key points to understanding gender differences. The first point is a gendered standpoint, meaning that women have a unique standpoint to conduct research compared to their male counterparts. The second key point, focusing on women’s lives and work, emphasizes where women are in society and what laws of liberty they are present under. The third point is the differences among women, and the last point is social change. Social change is progress that requires the transformation of desire. Reflection for social change is necessary, and can be motivated suddenly and radically by calls to conscience. She also argued that marriage and gender negatively affected women, as women are denied workforce participation. Women are seen as helpless and, therefore, are given limited workforce opportunities (Allan & Daynes, 2017). These ideas are why feminists advocate for equal access to jobs and compensation. She argued that women can do as much as a man in the same occupation, if not more. Her feminist ideas helped pave the way for Jane Addams’ and Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s concepts and theories.

We see the work of these theorists illustrating feminism through the current debate on women’s reproductive rights. These rights are centered around the United States government recently overturning Roe v. Wade in 2022. This court case gave women the right to privacy and protected a woman’s choice whether to have an abortion. Rights like this are detrimental to women because they violate their right to be free from violence, to privacy, to family, to health, and to life (Human Rights Watch, 2024). Additionally, for women living in poverty or of color, this ban could make it hard for them to have access to safe and affordable healthcare, which ultimately leads to unsafe practices that can cause major damage to the body inside and out. A key issue within feminism is the reproductive rights of women. Ever since the second wave of feminism, reproductive rights have been an important topic. People, specifically men, are arguing that they have the right to a woman’s body, when no one should be telling a woman what she can and cannot do with her bodily autonomy. When the decision for Roe v. Wade was put in place, it seemed like a step forward for feminists based on what they were advocating for, but with it now being overturned, women are now years set back from the goal they finally thought they had reached.

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