

Reading Response

Gender and History

How do I envision history? Honestly, I am guilty for only really thinking of men as the main contributors in historical situations. But millions of others only associate men with historical events, so I am not alone. After reading this article I kind of felt bad about myself for always leaving out the women that have been “absent” in my mind. Women are such a huge part of history as well that I really can’t believe that so many classes and books have left them out, or as Mark Angelos says: put them as a mere footnote at the end of chapters.

Mark Angelos starts the article off by telling a little history of “Women’s History,” (1960s and 1970s) and what affect this all had on society (drawing attention to gender inequalities). A big statement that stuck out to me was the following: “Scholars argued that women’s absence from traditional history was both a by-product and a cause of their unequal position compared to men.” I thought about this statement multiple times and each time I always came back to the same conclusion no matter what perspectives I took about it, Women are stuck in the past because they were unable to be a part of the history. This means that women I still thought of to be under men in every category and this is the basis of all gender inequality.

Why were women left out of history? This answer is ambiguous and could have multiple answers but the main points were they were thought less of than men and women of the past weren’t necessarily literate. History is defined as a field by the analysis of written documents from the past. Basically the only literate people throughout the middle ages (before and after as well) were members of the church society, more specifically the men of the church society. Now how were women supposed to have their shot in history if they couldn’t take part in recording history? It was unfair and this has been setting a precedent for even today’s society. The further and further we travel in the past, the further and further the gap widens between both women and men, and women and education. Before the middle ages there were even less opportunities for women to get an education. Maybe some time in the future there will be a time when these gaps close and we will truly be equal.

Patriarchy is simply a way to describe men having power over women as a social phenomenon. This system is run by men, for men, with no regards to women. Men make the social norms, which are created off of male experiences, and the male experience is thought to be the Human Experience. This is where the struggle of equality originates. Women have only really been studied in two ways, the first one being female rulers or women of power. The second way is more recent and more interesting (in my opinion), that is women of minority and oppression. Such as: Harriet Tubman or Anne Frank. These women are studied for their horrendous oppressions, their thoughts of freedom and equality, and their will to keep faith of equality.

Throughout history women have been looked down upon, but in the recent decades many steps have been made for the equality of all sexes, genders and classes. In my mind there should be no

need for Gender Studies because we should all just live and let live. There is no need for judgment or false perception of what people are.