Fight for Humanity: Culture and Women’s Rights along the 20th and 21st Centuries

Preface

The aim of this essay is to make a comparison between the time from Virginia’s Woolf and to the actual one, passing chronologically through two different historical moments related with the women’s role in society in order to advice how many obstacles the women have had along of time for such to be recognized as an equal as the men.

The first point to talk is the time where women’s rights were a dystopia and everybody lived on a patriarchy system. We will be able to see it and to be aware of the fact through the novel A room of Own’s, written by Virginia Woolf and published on the 20th century. After analyzing briefly the written we will focus on some specific statements of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, accurately with Women’s Rights, and we will put them in relation with what was affirmed by Woolf.

After that, using the virality of the movement ‘’me too’’ and other feminisms events, we will see some features related with what was said before but with the present time. Raising ourselves that many rights have been adapted easily but even that, there are many places that don’t recognize the mainly rights and justness that belongs to women. Seeing how the role of womenfolk have been developing and empowering on society and adapting to the different life cultures.

A room of One’s Own

This is a novel written by Virginia Woolf and published on September 1929. Her handwritten was about the relationship between women and literature, even that, it could be considered as an analysis of the women’s history. Not only related to literature, but in the general world. She not exclusive talks about what she was asked for, she also talked about the women’s role in society.

The title of her essay is an enormous metaphor. Women need freedom, be independency… women need a room of one’s own. Making reference to the need of having a specific and individual space and time for ourselves, the women. According to the time the novel was written, female sector was excluded from politic, economic and even social life. They were treated as an inferiority, being depraved and never considered suitable for jobs which required some intellectual or physical effort. Since ever, women have been conditioned by their gender. Always related with washing, cooking, sewing and primarily having children. Their biological condition predetermined their destiny and their role in society.

Her wish to become a part of society, as having education, being writer… is the reflection of the yearning of the rest of women. Reading Virginia’s words was like feeling the full weight of all the pain from all the women who lived in that century and how oppressed they were.

The creation of Shakespeare's sister is a majestic 'metaphor' which reflects the gender inequality reality. Judith was a brilliant and talented woman born on sixteenth century who couldn't make reality her dream to become a renowned writer due to her biological condition of being women. This 'unreal' character created by Wolf, fights against the social system and tries to break the stereotype about of men, the only ones who can develop intellectual activities, in this case, being writer. Judith has absolute the same conditions as Shakespeare, but unfortunately, she is a woman. Which means she will never become a litterateur and, in the end, she will kill herself because the impotency and hopelessness of changing people female conventional image failed.

She was the image of all the woman oppressed but this one tried to smash the silence.

Half a century later from Virginia's time

The atrocity made by the II World War brought with it The Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1984. It was made on the General Assemble and it also have some agencies as UNICEF or UNESCO. This declaration recollects all the rights to which a person is inherently entitled simply because she or he is a human being, and they were created to protect and promulgate the equality, non-discrimination, universality, indivisibly and interdependence…

From decades, the women have been related always to the care of the children and the house chore. They have been denied to political participation, to education, to own property, have been slaveries from men, treated as a sexual object and discriminated. But when time of war arrived the need of the mobilization of the entire population created the expansion of the role of women.

At first, they were commissioned about few tasks from all the men who were militating; from places on fabrics till economical and even political occupations.

When the war ended and the male section came back home, the women continued connected with the working market. Even that, with many differences of conditions between man.

The simple fact of notice the grass under your feet, while you hear the noise of the stream that goes down and feeling free, 100 years ago was a flight of fancy for all the women. At the beginning of Wolf's novel, it is explained that the access to some places was exclusively for men, and if it was not the case, all the women need the permission from one. All the actions they were making, were controlled from a patriarchal perspective. Taking a walk freely was a dream, imagine what it would be like to be able to vote. The utopia of the right to vote for women would never have come before.

With the Declaration, the women had guaranteed the right to vote. In some countries it was accepted few time ago (Finland was the first country in 1893), but till the year 1984 it was not officially accepted thanks to the mobilizations created by the suffragettes, the group of woman that were willing to fight for such the recognition of equality between both genders in political and economical issues. In that point, the fight for justness began, and after the right to have political voice prompted the weaker sex to be empowered.

Virginia Wolf talks about the lack of independency, and about the lack of autonomy for females.

The relations stablished were always controlled by the man, all the decisions taken were made by the man. They always needed the permission of their father, brother or husband. If the political decisions are made by the man, the woman position will stay always quiescent. Why someone would give some power trough rights to another one if they have whatever they want? With universal suffrage a new political fan opens which brings evolution and development to society.

Growing up on a world where you are not able to being educate it should to be aggravating. Not only your knowledge is questioned, also your ability, potential and aptitudes are. One of the core frameworks to assume evolution is education, and when the right to education is denied, the social and cultural progress become deceased. Virginia's father despite of her requests for receiving an education he never leaved her. He said that woman's places are home. So, she had to see how all her brothers received education while she was 'formed' to be the proper women.

The prohibition to education for women, as Wolf suffered, ended also with the Universal Declaration. All the human being has the right to be educated, not depending of their gender, age, ethnicity and economical standards. With it, a chance to everybody to have the same opportunities and also in laboral issues.

Many time before the UDHR, the working market was advantaged by males. As it is said before, the women always was related to house tasks, so their only economical benefits was according to sew in factories or sowing the fields, never having an opportunity due to their lack of education. They were rejected from the world of work. However, on the declaration, all the humanity has the right and the freedom to have a job, that is beneficial, chosen by your own, and worthy.

It remains, however, to win the great battle of the right to work on equal terms with men, although there are countries in which women have already obtained very positive results in this field. End of the discrimination of work. Equivalent wages and equal opportunity.

The employment rate of women, according to the European Union data, are greater than men in, but this is due they have more job positions, but the male is the one who gets the higher ranks. There are more women working, but not leading.

One of the facts that disturb the inclusion of women at work is the maternity. The will and interest of having a baby makes nowadays that the image of women is unable at work than men. The study called Maternidad y Trayectoria Profesional collects data on this incompatibility, as 40% of women have not been able to access a job and 35% have not promoted it because they are mothers.

The fact that democracy has hardly existed in our history, in 1948, every single human had the individual right of freedom of opinion, of expression, of circulation, of though, of conscience and to private life. In 1948, the world started to move on, now is time to return the pendulum to the origin and balance the balance.

The movement of Me Too

The New York Times published an article on 2017, where many women denounced the producer Harvey Weinstein for suffering sexual aggression and sexual harassment.

One of the victims, after posting her experience on social networks, her account was closed. Immediately, all the female sector raised the voice and launching the movement of ‘Mee Too’ created by a wave effect through humanity.

Trough this movement, many women have become braver, and have decided to share all their histories and their full pain. Any women should to feel guilty or embarrassed, only the abusers should. We live in a broken culture, due to sex differences. Women have not been heard or believed for a long.

After all the historical progress bringing equality to the actual society, one of the last peaks for sanding are the tussle against the physical, psychological and emotional abuse. After having made a ‘superficial’ cleansing of the injustices that affected women, now is time to be aware off how a real society should be, respecting everybody’s freedom and rights. The wounds are much more durable, but are a reminder of how strong we have to fight.

Another movement which achieved that thousand of women raise their voices and take to the streets to fight for their rights and freedoms was ‘Time’s Up’. Whose objective was the same than ‘Me Too’

Both movements starred the Golden Globe Awards where all the actress dressed in black to show their solidarity with the movement. In that year, women became history. A change that affected on culture, geography, race, religion, working market and politics.

On the present time and in our cultural context, there exist some other movements performacing the women’s rights.

The 8th of March, is the international women’s day. The data mark it with massive manifestations and strikes. It commemorates the struggle of women for their participation, on the basis of equality of opportunities that are often less than those of men, in society and in their integral development as a person. At the beginning it was in order to renamed all those working women (1911), but actually, is the international Women’s strike which is convened by feminist organizations and has accession of more than 70 countries and a large number of related local activities is expected. It is supposed that all the female inhabitants should to stop doing their labours (even at home) and stop the world. Show to the other gender that without women, all homes, systems and the world falls.

The word feminism, has received too many pejorative connotative and negative meanings, even given by the women themselves. This is due to that not many people know the real sense, which is the doctrine and social movement that call for the recognition of abilities and rights that women require in order to reach the equality between both genders.

We believe that the fight for women’s rights is pretty actual, but the fact is that from centuries, there were a lot of women who tried and struggled till the end of their days. Now is the moment to take conscience of the situation and act, fight for your rights, our rights, the rights for those who are not with us. Fight for humanity.

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