

Run for the hills it's..... Feminism!

By Sean Marshall

The McCool Blog

Dec 12, 2010

"In high school I didn't think I was angry enough to be a feminist but I'd say I am now." A bold comment from Lyla Miklos an award winning broadcaster, publicist, and women and gay rights activist. She was one of the four key speakers in the F-word Symposium.

The F-word Symposium was held Nov. 18th at the Laurier Brantford University. The symposium was all about the term feminism why it causes some to run for cover while empowering others. Answering questions the conference went over tough questions like what feminism means, why people are turned away from feminism and if a man can call himself a feminist.

According to Bryn Ossington, a part time philosophy and women's studies student who is an active member of Waterloo's Regional Male Allies Against Sexual Violence program, we can be feminists but are usually feminist supporters. "I feel Feminism can transcend gender. It's about equality for everyone so why shouldn't everyone get involved?" explained Bryn Ossington. "Men throughout history have been more privileged than women so they should help out the cause."

Dr. Margret Toye an assistant professor with Women's studies addressed the misconception of feminists. "The stereotype that feminists are fat lesbians with short hair cuts, hairy legs, and are constantly angry with everything. That's why people don't like the word. If more people had a sense of humour and pointed out that the stereotype was ridiculous and that no feminist is all those things the F-word wouldn't be so bad."

Then there's the inspiring power of feminism "Feminism gives women their own space, their own goals and that's empowering," said Margret Toye. "A lot of women fell trapped because of their circumstance feminism gives them a way to fight back but in an organized productive way of fighting the establishment." commented Lyla Miklos. "I found that feminism taught me and other men to drop stigma's and prejudice of women and just help them." explained Ossington. "Above all else feminism opened the eyes of men everywhere and showed them that assaults both sexual and aggressive are not just the problem of women but the problem of men and women."

One interesting topic came up: Feminism in the armed forces. A topic that hardly comes up in a feminism conference. It was a tad jarring for some to even consider it an issue. "I never even considered it, I mean there are defiantly issues with that topic but I never thought to look into it." said Bryn Ossington.

While Bryn Ossington was perplexed, Margret Toye had her own complicated insights. "On one hand everyone is equal which is good, but on the other hand as women you would have to give up your femininity because the armed forces are basically a boys club." She continued on to say "Any military experience would change a person but for women it seems especially hard. The best example I could

think of would be the movie G.I Jane. You watch that and you're like wow that's what it takes to get through."

" I think the army is almost the opposite of the feminine way." Said Lyla Miklos "The way I see it, is that feminism is all about equal voice of opinion. Women have a sort of conflict resolution with words and understandings. While the army follows a chain of command, no one questions it and there is very little thought about how everyone feels about the master plan. A woman would have to give up a part of herself in order to fully commit themselves to their country, and that would be one of the toughest things to do as a woman."

The unanimous opinion from the experts was that are ladies in the service have to give up a lot for their country.