



PROJECT BRIEF	
Class:	3rd Year Graphic - Multimedia Design
Project Number:	Research Psoposal
Project:	Term
Dates:	26 August 2016
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Title

“Feminism is not South African”.

Abstract

Question: “Do you favour votes for all women, irrespective of colour?”

Answer: “As a woman, sir, yes but as a South African born person, I feel that it would be wiser if we gave the vote to the European woman only” (The Report of the Select Committee on the Enfranchisement of Women, SC12-1929:51)

Women of colour have been kept in the sidelines for a long while but now but the narrative has changed. The quotes above illustrate their exclusion from the women’s rights movements. The playing field was never level, not for women of colour or even white women. Regardless of the suffrage movements, the liberties of women remained crippled and women had no contribution to the economic sector. The end of apartheid changed the whole narrative. It was as if a switch had been turned and women became players and participants in the economic narrative. It is no secret that South Africa had issues of racism, segregation and cultures that support patriarchy; all institutions that put women at the bottom of the chain. With all this in mind, it is a wonder that women have come to own businesses and become major participants in the South African economy. The field, while still levelling out now equates women of colour and white women in their priviledges, a far cry from the inequality shown in the quotes above. The ideologies of feminism or maybe women’s rights movements have definitely come into practice and influence the narrative directing South African women.

Research Questions

My research will focus around the question:

To what extent is feminism an appropriated phenomenon by women entrepreneurs in post colonial South Africa?

Developing questions around this may lead to asking:

- What is the feminism of South African women ?

- What does feminism mean for white women versus for women of colour?
- How do the different South African cultures contribute to these understandings?
- How does South African media contribute to our understanding of a social issue, such as Feminism?
- How did the South African women's rights movement become feminism? Is it the same thing?
- How has the post colonial environment been used to manipulate this understanding of the difference between the feminism movements and the women's rights movements?
- How do Dolan's classifications of feminism apply in South Africa?
- Does the system of patriarchy affect how far women can go in their self development?
- How did South Africa emerge caught up on feminism after all the censorship of the apartheid era ?
- How have women been contributing to the South African economy?
- Who are the highest contributors to the economy and what are their cultural backgrounds?
- What policies are there in place encouraging women into entrepreneurship?
- Has South Africa accepted feminism as a way of life in comparison to women's rights?
- What are the differences between the women's rights movement and feminism?

Aims and Objectives

The aim of this research is to explore the brand of South African feminism, how it came to be and whether it is truly benefiting women. The research will also delve into the economic successes of women and see to what extent it can be attributed to feminism. It is also important to know whether the practices of feminism are what have gotten South African women to where they are now. The research will question why feminism is where it is now and even though women are participating in the economic growth of South Africa, why it is just a few of them. This study also intends

reveal the differences between the women's rights movement and the feminism waves and if and why South Africa has adopted the latter.

Context and Relevance

The importance of this research is to understand South African feminism. During the feminism waves around the world, South Africa was censored from the world but come independence, South Africa emerged well versed in the workings of feminism especially women of colour who were excluded from the women rights movements. It will be important to determine if this feminism which South Africa has emerged with is its own brand or an adaptation of what has happened in the world. If the feminism in practice is a unique brand then the research will show and explore this particular brand, if not, it will be important to understand how South Africa, regardless of censorship, managed to adapt feminism.

The research will benefit the fields of feminism and female entrepreneurship by bringing to light the motivation behind the empowerment of women in South Africa with particular attention to women of colour. With information on the brand of feminism in South Africa, women will be able to manipulate it to its full potential and encourage even more women to become players in the economical field.

The relevance of the research is in that it answers social issues that will inform on the development of South African in terms of what women can now do and what they have done since the apartheid era.

South Africa is a country to whom most African countries look up to and this research will become the foundation for feminism that will be specifically African.

Should the research show that the brand of feminism in South Africa is an appropriated one, it will become necessary to broaden the base by then figuring out what can be made South African and what can be added on given South Africa's unique cultural issues.

The research will mainly focus on female entrepreneurs in South Africa. For a country that is mostly patriarchal, it can be safely assumed that for women to be in any form of power, it is because of feminism. However, South Africa never went through the waves of feminism but went through the Women's rights movements.

The primary focus of the research will be to differentiate the women's rights movement and the feminism waves and try to explain how that became one thing in

South Africa as well as how far this combination has been exploited by women entrepreneurs.

Research Methodology

In order to proceed, the research will need me to conduct a qualitative research on women's positions in the industries, how much they earn and how successful they are in their positions. Qualitative research will also be conducted and be used to compare the economic achievements of women during the apartheid era and the post apartheid era. There will also be a need to compare the achievements of white women versus women of colour. It will also be imperative to consult texts that have been written about feminism such as those of Dolan and Wolpe. This will provide clear definitions of what feminism is and be useful in explaining and differentiating it from the women's rights movements of South Africa. Historical texts on South Africa will also be consulted in order to get an understanding of the context of South Africa.

Materials that will be used in this research include a documentary on issues of entrepreneurship in Africa, interviews from South African women entrepreneurs with successful and failed businesses as well. Newspaper articles on the economic players in South Africa during apartheid as well as after apartheid as they will inform on the change of narrative. Books and articles on feminism will also be consulted.

Data collection methods will include taking notes during interviews as well as from the documentary. Looking into articles that have been written about the key elements of the topic will also be part of the data collection.

The key elements of the research are women, feminism, entrepreneurship, post-colonial, South Africa and economy. Data will be interpreted in its relation to these key elements. Since these elements are also all present in the documentary to be used, a visual analysis of the documentary will be conducted. Existing theories on feminism, entrepreneurship and postcolonial discourses will also be discussed and analysed.

Preliminary literature Review

The Frame of the Research

Feminism was born into visual culture; it is all about representation. Most performance at its inception was made in such a way that it reinforced cultural conditioning (Dolan 1988: 2). Before 1994, the cultural conditioning of South Africa was stemmed in racism, segregation and patriarchy. Dolan's description of cultural conditioning will be useful in explaining why the narrative did not include women in any leading roles. Dolan describes three categories of feminism: liberal feminism, cultural feminism and materialist feminism. These have all come into practice in South Africa regardless of there never having been feminist waves or any narrative that promoted the feminism ideologies. Wolpe's descriptions of the Second Wave feminism that developed in the late 1960s in Western Europe and North America is that the basis of feminism was in liberal, socialist and Marxist influences (Wolpe 85:1998). This information, when juxtaposed with the fact that South Africa was under censorship from liberal, socialist and Marxist ideologies deepens the questions of the basis of South Africa's feminism.

Minding the Gap: Gender Equality and Trade in Africa is a short film that follows the stories of several African women as they go through the processes of eliminating gender barriers and becoming economically sustainable members of their countries. This film informs the struggle as well as the active feminism that is now present in Africa, particularly South Africa. It is important to know the basis of feminism in Africa in order to understand where the narrative goes in the South African context and why it is not fully exploited yet. In this documentary there are recurring themes of seeking permission from fathers and husbands, which points towards a high influence of patriarchy in African cultures. Meer (104:1995) speaks about how the dynamics of culture affect the development of women's agendas. The research will go on to investigate what other dynamics stand in the way of women's agendas. Wolpe has noted that a lot of the struggle that occurs is never documented which is why the major concerns of the differences between feminists, for example the tensions of feminisms between women of colour and white women is not fully known.

The feminist spectator as Critic in Theatre and Dramatic Studies by J. Dolan will inform the research by clearly defining the types of feminisms that are present in the world and how they are implemented in South Africa.

"Where angels fear to tread": Feminism in South Africa by A. Wolpe informs on the

practices of feminism in South Africa and how they came to be as well as how they differ from the rest of the world. Feminism has already been defined and put into different categories.

Dolan describes liberal feminism as feminism that strives to work within the system and relies on universal humanism (Dolan 1988:6). Its successes have been the increase of women in the workplace. The success of liberal feminism can also be seen in the tackling of the representation of women who can now be seen in more diverse performance roles. Before 1994, the struggle of women was mainly by individuals who got involved in politics. They were icons only in the sense of how they got imprisoned and led political groups. Politics made sense because any other feminist agenda would have been seen as diversion from the fight for independence. The struggle was for freedom then with independence it became about education and then jobs. Liberal feminism is in existence because of women like Rapelang Rabana who is the CEO of ReKindle Learning and Yeigo Communications. At the same time there isn't enough women in the workplace. Meer (104:1995) describes the shortage of women in the workplace as a crisis of poverty, inequality and representation. In this respect, white women are more advanced than women of colour because of the historical background of South Africa. Cultural feminism is also known as radical feminism (Dolan 1988:7). This feminism aimed to define men and women in categories other than gender. While liberal feminism works within the system of the male representation, cultural feminism suggests that female representation take the place of male representation altogether (Dolan 1988: 7). A successful implementation of this in South Africa is the case of Judge Masipa who presided over the biggest criminal case in South Africa. In a patriarchal society, this was a huge step for feminism. Eyebrows were raised when the case had to be retried and feminists held their hearts in their hands with high hopes that this would not be blamed on the fact that a woman had been judge in the matter. Materialist feminism does not focus on the gender itself but seeks to understand the policies, cultural and social structures that have caused the oppression of gender categories. Materialist feminism pries into psychoanalytic theories of gender in order to establish what is progressive and what is not. While there has been a lot of progression in South Africa, there is no body of knowledge on the theories that brought on feminism in South Africa. Having defined all the forms of feminism, this offers an insight into

what happens in South Africa and defining it and also show what's missing but it leads to the bigger question: How did we get here? What influenced South Africa to catch up to the world in this aspect? How did the women's rights movement and the women's liberation movement turn into the foundation for the practice of feminism in South Africa?

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