



michigan tech's

# TECHNOBABE TIMES

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"Feminism is the radical notion that women are human beings." —Cheris Kramerae

## What feminism means to me

a quilt of responses from all over, to prepare us for "Women's Month" in March

### ARIANA JO JESKE

Ariana Jo is majoring in Civil Engineering here at Tech.

Here I am, Ani blasting in my ears... thoughts of **tbt** in my head. What does it mean to be a young feminist these days? What are the rules? What do you do as a young feminist? Why the term "young feminist"? More importantly, what does it mean to be a young woman in this world? That's the one that confuses me more. Being a young feminist automatically provokes a critique of my world and my position in it. Being a young woman without the feminist template doesn't. All I can offer is my view on it. I'm finding it's a vast collection of contradictions. Think about it, I'm

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### MANIFESTA: YOUNG WOMEN, FEMINISM, AND THE FUTURE

*Manifesta* is a book by Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2000). Learn more at [www.manifesta.net](http://www.manifesta.net). What follows is an excerpt from the book.

In the most basic sense, feminism is exactly what the dictionary says it is: the movement for social, political, and economic equality of men and women. Public opinion polls confirm that when people are given this definition, 67 percent say they agree with feminism. We prefer to add to that seemingly uncontroversial statement the following: feminism means that women have the right to enough information to make informed choices about their lives. And because "women" is an all encompassing term that includes middle-class white women, rich black lesbians, and working-class straight Asian women, an organic in-

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### "WOMANISM"

by Irene Monroe, from [http://www.africana.com/Utilities/Content.html?&.../cgi-bin/banner.pl?banner=Education&.../articles/tt\\_494.htm](http://www.africana.com/Utilities/Content.html?&.../cgi-bin/banner.pl?banner=Education&.../articles/tt_494.htm)

The term *womanism* was coined by the African American writer Alice Walker in her 1983 book *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens*. Walker defined a womanist as a black feminist who continues the legacy of "outrageous, audacious, courageous, and willful, responsible, in charge, serious" African American women - women who are agents for social change for the wholeness and liberation of black people, and, by extension, the rest of humanity. A womanist can be a lesbian, a heterosexual, or a bisexual woman. She celebrates and affirms African American women's culture and physical beauty. She loves herself.

Although the words religion or Christianity do not appear in Walker's definition, the word womanism has religious as well as secular usage. Because Walker emphasizes African American women's love for the spiritual, black Christian women have used the womanist concept to articulate their participation in, and witness to, divine power and presence in the world. Womanist Christian thought and practices began to flourish in the mid-1980s as a way to challenge racist, sexist, and white feminists' religious discourse and practice, all of which ignored the black experience in church and society. ♀

### EMILY SMITH

Emily is a designer who lives in Berlin, Germany; she studied at MTU for several years in the mid-90s.

what feminism means to me...  
that i discuss american foreign policy while preparing sour cream avocado dip  
that i paint my toenails red and my fingernails blue  
that i buy comfy little boy underwear and lacy push-up bras  
that i dream of raising children and starting my own company  
that i bought a sewing machine and a sander at the flea market  
that i sing dolly parton and shout ani difranco and whisper madonna and croon with björk  
while vacuuming in my cowboy boots ♀

### davina pallone

davina is an MTU grad, class of '98. She owns and operates a web design studio in Salt Lake City, Utah.

In trying to define what feminism means to me, I find myself struggling to be succinct. It means so many things—a celebration of the female, a desire to validate the "feminine" in a male-centered culture, an attempt to ensure the safety and well-being of women worldwide. But the meaning of feminism goes deeper for me... I feel strongly that whenever a segment of society is disenfranchised, all other segments of society suffer for it. There is no question that women have been systematically silenced and discouraged from being full citizens in most cultures—this is an attempt to disenfranchise about half the population of the world. How can this not adversely affect everyone involved? So: feminism is an attempt to equalize the world's inequities, to distribute the wealth of knowledge and freedom to all the world's inhabitants, both female and male. Feminism informs my views on environmentalism, civil and human rights, world population control, racial and cultural diversity, poverty and wealth distribution, war and peace... The list goes on. Feminism is common sense and high morals and hard science; compassion and intelligence and sheer sexiness. Feminism is everything good in this world. ♀

### MATT HILL

Matt is a graduate student in the Humanities department and a deejay with WMTU.

"We are not a feminism" (written to Latyxx)  
What is feminism to me? I hesitate to answer. Not because feminism is more than one thing and I fear reducing it to an essential element. I hesitate more because for several years I've been attempting—with varying degrees of success—to avoid choosing a specific place from which I view the world. This refusal to choose could be a result of some postmodern politics or aesthetics that I wish to ascribe to. Maybe. It could be a result of the geopolitical shift in the dispersal of capital (sorry, I've recently begun reading *Empire*). Sort of. Or it could be a cop-out, a shirking of responsibility. Less likely, but still possible. I suppose what I take most from the vast reaches of feminism is something not so new. The personal is political. Contrary to some readings of this phrase, I don't see this as

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### LORIE MAZZARA

Lorie is studying Biomedical Engineering at MTU.

What does it mean to be a feminist? Don't quite know how to respond? I didn't! I realized that, yeah, I consider myself a feminist – I think... or do I? Well, Webster says that feminism is "the movement to win political, economic, and social equality for women." Now I am not sure if that still holds true today, because it seems to me that when people think of feminism they think of a "Fema-Nazi" type of person that hates men and think that women are su-

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### FAITH MORRISON AND JACKIE HUNTOON

Faith Morrison is an Associate Professor in Chemical Engineering. Jackie Huntoon is an Associate Professor in Geological Engineering & Sciences.

Being a feminist means never being afraid of being called a bitch for doing the sorts of things that get men promoted. ♀

### FAITH WILDING

Faith Wilding is a Fellow in the Studio for Creative Inquiry at Carnegie Mellon University.

"(Cyber)Feminism is a browser through which to see life."

If cyberfeminists have the desire to research, theorize, work practically, and make visible how women (and others) worldwide are affected by new communications technologies, technoscience, and the capitalist dominations of the global communications networks, they must begin by clearly formulating cyberfeminisms' political goals and positions. Cyberfeminists have the chance to create new formulations of feminist theory and practice that address the complex new social, cultural, and economic conditions created by global technologies.

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### DAVID FLASPOHLER

David is an Assistant Professor in the School of Forestry and Wood products.

To me, feminism means a belief that the strengths and abilities of women will be equally valued by all members of a society, that the importance of gender is recognized but is not used to justify overt or covert prejudice, that a culture and a society thrive when gender-based differences are valued and not subverted, that choices unique to each gender remain under their control and are respected, that one is an advocate for individual freedom as well as social responsibility, and that an individual can feel pride as a man or a woman and be personally elevated by that pride. ♀

### KRISTIN AROLA

Kristin is a graduate student in Humanities.

What does feminism mean to me? My students often ask me this when I try to 'corrupt' their minds with my witchcraft. My response is usually abstract, "Well, feminism isn't really *one* thing. Some feminists are pro-life, some are pro-choice, some are religious, some aren't, some are lesbian, some are married to men, some live on communes..." I try to demystify feminism to

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### FROM THE COMBAHEE RIVER COLLECTIVE STATEMENT (1977)

The Combahee River Collective is a Boston-based political organization.

We are a collective of Black feminists who have been meeting together since 1974. During that time we have been involved in the process of defining and clarifying our politics, while at the same time doing political work within our own group and in coalition with other progressive organizations and movements.

The most general statement of our politics at the present time would be that we are actively committed to struggling against racial, sexual, heterosexual, and class oppression and see as our particular task the development of integrated analysis and practice based upon the fact that the major systems or oppression are interlocking. The synthesis of these oppressions creates the conditions of our lives. As Black women we see Black feminism as the logical political movement to combat the manifold and simultaneous oppressions that all women of color face. ♀

### MARVIN ROBERSON

Marvin Roberson is Forest Policy Specialist with the Mackinac Chapter Sierra Club.

Feminism means to me doing my part to assist other men in being able to see the majority of the human race take their place as leaders, spokeswomen, and simply full-fledged people. It also means understanding and assisting other men in understanding that this means we will NOT always be the leaders, spokespeople, and centers. I give thanks for the many strong, creative women who have assisted me in seeing these truths. ♀



### HEIDI BOSTIC

Heidi is Assistant Professor of French at MTU.

What does feminism mean to me? Honestly, I can't give just one answer. It may be most useful to talk about "feminisms" in the plural. I do think that "the f- word," as students in my introductory Women's Studies courses (at other universities) used to call it, is a term that would benefit from fewer definitions by detractors, and more attempts at definitions by supporters.

For many women and men, discovering feminism means discovering that there is a name for the struggle in which you are engaged, for the awareness of and responses to injustices you have witnessed. The consciousness-raising aspect of feminism has involved lots of personal testimonies, but feminism also means going beyond the individual case to examine larger social phenomena—the forces that act upon us without us realizing it. I think that it is on this social level that we can more clearly perceive the complicated ways in which race, class, sexual orientation and gender identity interact.

With Valentine's Day approaching, this is an opportune time for more people to learn about the V-Day global movement (<http://www.vday.org/index2.cfm>) and about violence against women in general. Feminism is all about being informed and taking responsibility. ♀

ARIANA JO JESKE, con't.

sitting at my computer with a fabulous example of the newest wave of feminist music pumping through my audio nerves right now and to my left sits the latest issue of *Cosmo*, which I have read cover to cover. And I wonder why. I don't accept that it is because I possess two X chromosomes. I think it is to see that the world of manufactured femaleness has passed me by. My life still functions very well without extensive knowledge of eyeliner, but yet I am curious. I ponder the social implications of painting one's face. *Cosmo* seems to be a manual of social projection, of what a "woman" could be. Or as the spine of that magazine tells me, "Fun—Fearless-Female". Those ideals are something that come to me more than once a day. Is it fun to be a fearless female? Or should each be taken separately: have fun, be fearless, and most of all be female? Then it comes back to that initial question what does it mean to be female, or a young woman in this world? I know that the position of women is still inferior to that of men, yet it is better than when the mothers of feminism veered from the status quo to be radical and groundbreaking. I am left without a guiding force and an ambiguous goal, equality of women. What does that mean? The equality of women? Being a different sex from men, at what point will we be equal? Equal pay? Reduced violent crimes against women, better prosecution for offenders? Equal ratios in working disciplines? I am confused. Sometimes I imagine a world where it won't be noted that I am female, that I am simply a person. That's where I imagine equality being equal and existent. And one where I can read *Cosmo* while listening to Ani and not feel sheepish or a tinge of guilt by doing so. ♀

KRISTIN AROLA, con't.

the point that I almost kill it. They will often ask, "OK, but where do you stand? What do you feel feminism is?" I've never come up with a good answer. I guess it's about time I do.

I consider myself a feminist. I am pro-choice (but not pro-abortion as the right would have you believe) but I do not think I would ever have an abortion. I am married to a man but kept my last name (yes, my father's name—the line has to be drawn somewhere). At its base, I have no qualms with the sex industry (porn, strip-clubs, prostitution), but I do have qualms with the culture that encourages women to place self-worth in their bodies. I am fat and I am beautiful, but I am constantly angry at the society that tries to make me ashamed of my body (and often times succeeds). I do not want to be equal to men, because this assumes that patriarchal culture is superior and something to strive toward, but I do want equal opportunities. I enjoy sex, and I am not ashamed to talk about it, nor am I ashamed to talk about "down there" (vagina I want my voice to be heard, and not dismissed because I'm "on the rag" or "some crazy liberal dyke" or "too irrational." Feminism allows me to be smart, and beautiful, and angry, and critical, and sexy, and proud, and confused. Some say 'feminism is the radical notion that women are people' but it's so much more than that. Feminism is empowerment. ♀

### WHAT IS tbt POLICY?

The TechnoBabe Times is a private, non-profit publication dedicated to the empowerment of women in all aspects of technology.

We want tbt to be a place where voices not usually heard or seen on campus or in the community can be seen & heard. We want to be a publication that encourages new & different voices. And so: we solicit thoughtful, reflective, critical writings (or drawings or poems or...) that offer us all positive views and smart actions...

If you have ideas, questions, or comments—or wish to advertise in tbt—please contact editor-in-chief Anna Swartz at [akswartz@mtu.edu](mailto:akswartz@mtu.edu) or write to us at [tbt@mtu.edu](mailto:tbt@mtu.edu). Write the list to submit a piece of work or to become part of the tbt staff.

THANK YOU to the CCLI and all the writers for help on this issue.

STAFF FOR THIS ISSUE: **editor in chief:** Anna Swartz **faculty advisor:** Anne Frances Wysocki **layout:** the committee **staff:** Katrina Farren, John Forbes, Kira Gerweck, Amy Graham, Matt Hill, M.E. Housewright, Ariana Jo Jeske, Diane Koskela, Kel Layer, Lorie Mazzara, Karen Springsteen, Mike Stevens, Aswin Sudhakaran.

LORIE MAZZARA, con't.

perior (which we all know does have some truth to it). I really do not agree with that notion of feminism at all! In fact, I think it's imbecilic that someone would even consider, much less try, to put another person—man, women, adult, child, whoever—above anyone else. I guess that I just support people in general; I think that everyone should be considered and treated equally, no matter who they are or what they have or don't have between their legs. I also don't agree with the dictionary definition either because it says, "to win" the equality for women, we shouldn't have to win our equality. Equal human rights are not something that should have to be won! So, I am a feminist? NO!!! I am not! I am a humanist! ♀

FAITH WILDING, con't.

Strategic and politically savvy uses of these technologies can facilitate the work of a transnational movement that aims to infiltrate and assault the networks of power and communication through activist-feminist projects of solidarity, education, freedom, vision, and resistance. To be effective in creating a politicized feminist environment on the Net that challenges its present gender, race, age, and class structures, cyberfeminists need to draw on the researches and strategies of avant garde feminist history and its critique of institutionalized patriarchy. While affirming new possibilities for women in cyberspace, cyberfeminists must critique utopic and mythic constructions of the Net, and strive to work with other resistant netgroups in activist coalitions. Cyberfeminists need to declare solidarity with transnational feminist and postcolonial initiatives, and work to use their access to communications technologies and electronic networks to support such initiatives. ♀

read more at <http://www-art.cfa.cmu.edu/www-wilding/wheremf.html>

AMY GRAHAM

Amy is a graduate student in the Humanities department.

Feminism is to me the idea of valuing all people equally. It means raising my daughter in a way that teaches her she is capable of anything and that the world should be, though sadly isn't, aware of this. Feminism means teaching her that she is (or should be?) the only one in control of her body, her self image, and her future. It means opposing things that tell her otherwise, even things that may seem little to others—like bikini contests. This writing may seem a little scattered, but that's because my view of feminism is scattered: feminism is not just one thing. It is many things.

But they all center around the crazy notion that women are human beings. ♀

RUSH LIMBAUGH

At his website, [www.rushlimbaugh.com](http://www.rushlimbaugh.com), Rush advertises "Health Insurance You CAN Afford!!!" but gives no description of his background or credentials.

Feminism was established so that unattractive women could have easier access to the mainstream of society. ♀

MANIFESTA, con't.

tertwinning with movements for racial and economic equality, as well as gay rights, is inherent to the feminist mandate. Some sort of allegiance between women and men is also an important component of equality. After all, equality is a balance between the male and female with the intention of liberating the individual.

Breaking down that very basic definition, feminism has three components. It is a movement, a group working to accomplish specific goals. Those goals are social and political change—implying that one must be engaged with the government and law, as well as social practices and beliefs. And implicit to these goals is access to sufficient information to enable women to make responsible choices.

Of course the goals of feminism are carried out by every day women themselves. Maybe you aren't sure you need feminism, or you're not sure it needs you. You're sexy, a wallflower, you shop at Calvin Klein, you are a stay-at-home mom, a big Hollywood producer, a beautiful bride all in white, an ex-wife raising three kids, or you shave, pluck, and wax. In reality, feminism wants you to be whoever you are—but with a political consciousness. And vice versa: You want to be a feminist because you want to be exactly who you are. You may be a person patriarchal society doesn't value or allow, from a female cadet at the Citadel to a lesbian mother. Maybe you feel aligned with the self-determination and human rights implicit in feminism, but you also organize your life around race, religion, or class, rather than solely around gender. For instance, in the *Reader's Companion to U.S. Women's History*, the editors list 17 prominent kinds of feminism based on identity, including American Indian, Arab American, Asian American, Jewish, Latina, Lesbian, Marxist, Puerto Rican, and Working Class. There are also womanists, which, as coined and defined by novelist and poet Alice Walker, designates a black feminist (womanists are rarely men) without having to "add a color to become visible." Womanism, distinct from feminism's often white-centered history, is an alternative casting of the same basic beliefs about equality and freedom, and few womanists would deny the link to feminism. While each of these groups is magnetized by political equality, some additional aspect of their personhood needs to be emphasized because it affects their struggle for equality. ♀

MATT HILL, con't.

meaning everything is debatable, possible, or relative. (Those readings are unfair.) Rather, I see the "personal is political" to mean that the daily maneuverings to which people must attend are political negotiations with the world. If the "personal" is part of daily maneuverings, then the personal is political.

Did I answer the question? ♀

### RESOURCES

Barbara Kettle Gundlach Shelter 337-5623 domestic violence shelter; 24-hour crisis line

Career Counseling ..... 487-2313

Counseling Services ..... 487-2538

Dial HELP ..... 482-4357

Crisis intervention: a gentle, helpful voice, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Employee Assistance Program ... 482-2299

Ho'ton Community Health Ctr. .. 483-1860

Keweenaw Pride ..... [pride@mtu.edu](mailto:pride@mtu.edu)

or Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgendered or Questioning Students, Staff, Faculty, Community Members, Friends, & Allies

Legal Services of Northern MI .. 482-3908

Office of Student Affairs . 487-2212; 487-2465

Office of Residence Life ..... 487-3404

On-campus emergencies ..... 123

Planned Parenthood ..... 482-0790

Society of Intellectual Sisters (SIS) <http://www.sos.mtu.edu/sis/>

Promoting sisterhood primarily amongst African-American women and scholarship among members

Society of Women Engineers [radugopo@mtu.edu](mailto:radugopo@mtu.edu)

Western UP District Health Department 482-7382

AIDS testing, family planning, immunization, pregnancy testing



DIVERSITY

RAVINGS

February 16

7pm

MUB Commons

a support concert for Keweenaw Pride

with Old Victoria, sah, Days Go By, & minus

\$2 admission

Keweenaw Pride is supported by YOUR Student Activity Fee

PAT ROBERTSON

At his website, [www.patrobertson.com](http://www.patrobertson.com), Pat identifies himself as a "broadcaster, statesman, author, humanitarian, businessman and Christian."

The feminist agenda is not about equal rights for women...

It is about a socialist, anti-family political movement that encourages women to leave their husbands, kill their children, practice witchcraft, destroy capitalism, and become Lesbians. ♀

DIANE KOSKELA

Diane is a Tech alumna (class of 2000) and is departmental coordinator in the Information Technology department.

I was born a feminist. Being raised the only girl with four brothers made me aware at an early age that I was treated "different" than my siblings. My brothers were encouraged to be physical and to compete and be strong. I was encouraged to be quiet and ladylike. I'm not the quiet type.

My mother doted over my father and my brothers. I was expected to be her little helper. The "girls" spent Sundays and holidays slaving away in the kitchen while the "boys" sprawled out on the couch watching football. It didn't take me too long to figure out that that was bullshit.

I went to school in the sixties, before Title 9, when girls' sports didn't exist, at least at my school. If you were an athletic girl about your only option was to be a cheerleader. A lot of talent and dreams were wasted.

But most of the messages were more subtle: like being told that by being pretty and dainty I might grow up and marry a doctor – no one ever suggested that I could grow up and be a doctor.

Whenever I think of feminism I think of an anonymous quote, "Women are eagles raised as chickens." I think in many ways it's still true today.

Feminism to me means constantly questioning the status quo and most importantly, being diligent in protecting freedom and fair treatment—for everyone. Sadly, I believe organized religion has historically been and continues to be the biggest threat to women. Religious fundamentalism is on the rise worldwide: even the U.S. government is saturated with leaders who hold extremist religious views. Women will never attain equality as long as theology is used to justify oppressing them. ♀