



STUDY GUIDE
Women Make Movies

THE F WORD,

by Marcia Jarmel & Erin Gallagher

DISCUSSION GUIDE

"A dynamic and engaging piece and an important step toward rekindling discussions of feminism as we move toward the 21st century." - Angela Davis

SUGGESTED USES

The F Word is the ideal discussion starter for groups addressing issues such as feminism, gender, sex roles, societal attitudes, stereotypes, and oppressions.

It is intended for young adults (ages 16-18, with classroom preparation), for college undergraduates, and for continuing adult education students. The video can be used as a tool in classes such as History, Social Studies, Literature, Ethnic Studies, Sociology, Psychology, Family Studies, Anthropology, Women's Studies, and Gender Studies. It will also be of interest to dorm residential life programs, women's organizations, community groups, non-profit organizations, and businesses concerned with gender issues in the workplace.

TO DO BEFORE SCREENING

1. Tell students that they are about to watch a video called *The F Word*. What might it be about? What do they think feminism is? Do they know anyone who is a feminist? Are they? Why or why not? Why would a video about feminism be called *The F Word*?

2. List the "do you know" statistics on the board. Ask your students: What do these statistics mean? How do they

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make you feel? What do you think these statements have to do with feminism? Why do you think feminism/feminists exist?

3. Ask the students to work in pairs answering the following questions. Suggest that one person talks for 3-5 minutes while the other listens without interrupting or commenting. Then, switch roles. Have you ever felt you've been treated differently because of your sex? your age? your accent? your race? if you looked poor? where you were born? or other ways you were different? Share their answers in a class discussion.

BIOS OF THOSE QUOTED

Nilufer Catagoy, Caren Grown, Aida Santiago: delegates at the Nairobi Women's Conference, an international conference held to discuss issues facing women all over the world.

Susan Faludi: Journalist, former reporter for *The Wall Street Journal*, author of the 1991 bestseller *Backlash*.

Nancy Hartsock: Socialist feminist, professor of Political Science, and editor of *Quest: A Feminist Quarterly*.

Cheryl Johnson-Odim: Professor of History at Loyola University in Chicago, former Assistant Director of African Studies at Northwestern University.

Pat Robertson: TV evangelist, presidential candidate in 1986, founder of the Christian Broadcasting Network and the Christian Coalition.

Barbara Smith: Black lesbian author, activist, co-founder of Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, editor of *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology*, co-editor of *All of the Women are White, All of the Blacks are Men, but Some of Us are Brave: Black Women's Studies*.

Rebecca West: English novelist, journalist, political essayist, and biographer of the early 20th century. Wrote *The Meaning of Treason*, *Return of the Soldier*, and *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*.

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TO DO AFTER SCREENING

1. Ask students to discuss in pairs the most interesting parts of the video. Share their answers in a class discussion.

2. Create a mock dialogue with students role playing someone from the video with a different viewpoint than their own. What insight do they have now?

3. Ask each student to interview three people of different sex, age, race, or birthplace about what feminism means to them. Discuss the interviews in class.

4. Assign each student to research an organization that helps women. Ask them to report to the class about the organization and why it exists.

THEMES FOR DISCUSSION AFTER SCREENING

1. The Video

What did the video make students feel? Did they agree with some viewpoints? Disagree? Did it change their minds about what feminism is or could be?

2. Stereotypes

What is a stereotype? Have you ever been stereotyped? How did it make you feel? What are other stereotypes? Why do stereotypes exist? What feminist stereotypes are suggested in the video?

3. The Many Meanings of Feminism

Why does feminism mean so many different things to different people? Why doesn't everyone agree? Is feminism only a women's thing? Does it affect all women? Does feminism have many goals? If so, are there many feminisms? Is it possible for all feminists to have the same goals and concerns?

4. Visions for the Future

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What would make you call yourself a feminist? What would you like feminism to accomplish? Would you like to play a part in accomplishing these goals? What might your role be?

DID YOU KNOW?

- Every 15 seconds a woman or girl is beaten in the United States.
- There is more of a likelihood that a female will be beaten by a male than hurt in a car accident, rape, or mugging combined.
- 9 out of 10 murdered women are killed by men.
- A woman is raped every 1.3 minutes in the U.S.
- 1 out of every 3 woman-headed families lives in poverty.
- If a woman earns \$20,000 dollars a year for a job after graduating from high school, a man will likely make \$30,000 for the exact same job.
- On average, African-American women who are college graduates earn less than white male high school dropouts.
- Women are 9 times more likely than men to be forced to leave their jobs, 5 times more likely to transfer, and 3 times more likely to be fired because of sexual harassment.

READINGS AND QUESTIONS

AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMEN

Collins, Patricia Hill. "Mammies, Matriarchs, and Other Controlling Images," *Black Feminist Thought*. New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, 1990.

Discusses how negative images and stereotypes affect Black Women.

Lorde, Audre. "The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action." *Sister Outsider*. New York: Crossing Press, 1984.

An inspirational discussion about the importance of oppressed people speaking out.

Smith, Barbara. "Some Home Truths on the Contemporary Black Feminist Movement." *The Black Scholar*. 1985.

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Discusses Black feminism and the myths about Black feminists.

ASIAN-AMERICAN WOMEN

Noda, Kesaya. "Growing Up Asian in America." *Making Waves*. ed. by Asian Women United of California. Boston: Beacon Press, 1989.

A first person account of the interconnectedness of Japanese, American, and women identities

Tajima, Renee. "Lotus Blossoms Don't Bleed: Images of Asian Women." *Making Waves*. ed. by Asian Women United of California. Boston: Beacon Press, 1989.

An essay discussing the images of Asian women in the media.

Yamada, Mitsuye. "Invisibility is an Unnatural Disaster: Reflections of an Asian American Women." *This Bridge Called My Back*. ed. by Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldua. New York: Kitchen Table Press, 1983.

Discusses the specific problems facing Asian American women.

EUROPEAN AMERICAN WOMEN

Allison, Dorothy. "A Question of Class." *Skin*. Ithaca, New York: Firebrand Books, 1994.

A story of a young white girl growing up poor in the South.

Faludi, Susan. "Introduction." *Backlash*. New York: Doubleday, 1992.

Discusses the media backlash against feminists in the 1980s.

Wollstonecraft, Mary. "A Vindication of the Rights of Women." *The Rights of Women*. London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1792.

One of the earliest feminist treatises.

JEWISH AMERICAN WOMEN Kantrowtiz, Melanie Kaye. "Seeking A Feminist Judaism." *The Tribe of Dina*. New York: Farrar

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Strauss Giroux Publishing, 1989.

Discusses how Jewish Feminists are redefining Judaism

Kantrowtiz, Melanie Kaye. "To Be a Radical Jew in the Late 20th Century." *The Issue is Power*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1992.

An essay exploring the specific problems facing Jewish women.

Rich, Adrienne. "Split at the Root: An Essay on Jewish Identity." *Blood, Bread and Poetry*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 1986.

An essay on Jewish identity and feminism.

LATINA AND CHICANA WOMEN

Mora, Pat. "Legal Alien." *Making Face, Making Soul*. Gloria Anzaldua, ed. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books.

A personal account of Chicana alienation in both Mexican and American culture.

Moraga, Cherrie. "La Guerra." *Loving in the War Years*. Boston: South End Press, 1983.

A first person account of what it means to be a Chicana lesbian and feminist.

Morones, Carmen. "Grace." *Making Face, Making Soul*. Gloria Anzaldua, ed. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books.

A story about the racism, sexism, and classism a young Latina woman feels while in high school.

NATIVE AMERICAN WOMEN Allen, Paula Gunn. "Angry Women are Building: Issues and Struggles." *The Sacred Hoop*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Discusses the specific issues facing Native American women.

Cameron, Barbara. "Gee, You Don't Seem Like an Indian from the Reservation." *This Bridge Called My Back*. ed. by Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldua. New York: Kitchen Table Press, 1983.

A first person description of a Native American woman's alienation.

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Sanchez, Carol Lee. "Sex, Class and Race Intersections: Visions of Women of Color." *The Gathering of Spirit*. Beth Brant, ed. Ithaca, New York: Firebrand Books, 1988.

Discusses images and stereotypes of "Indian women."