

WRITTEN REFLECTIONS: FYSM 1502.B

5. "Slut Walks and Pussy Riots: Recent Feminist Movements in Perspective"

Question: "Is slut walk a positive contribution to female empowerment or does it encourage the objectification of women?"

Thesis: I think that SlutWalk can be a positive contribution to women over the long term, if the movement sustains its message and its protests in the name of change.

Evidence: the word slut is used as a weapon towards women and is considered a male-defined term to justify sexual violence. The co-founder of slut walk, Heather Jarvis, argues that in the case of embracing the word slut, that all women should be considered equal in the fight against it, and that if men call a woman a slut, that all women are sluts, regardless of clothing or decision-making (the Agenda with Steve Paikin). This appears to exemplify a rallying point for equality for women, in order to stand together and show that the word slut cannot be used as a weapon against them for men to justify sexual violence. In the long term, if this blatant defiance of the true meaning of such a demeaning term can continue, I believe that Jarvis's ideology could work.

Antithesis: despite the rallying power that SlutWalk has created compared to other feminist movements, it is considered by the critics to be a rally in support of a concept that has degraded women for generations. Gail Dines argues that being called a slut is in no way a positive influence on women and can in fact have negative effects on mental health, and that embracing this term further degrades women and does not change the attitudes of men who accept the use of the word slut (Dines, 2011). Empowering women to embrace the word that degrades them most could have the opposite effect, and rather empower the word slut in its current meaning in a male-driven sexual society.

Synthesis: in spite of the male-driven sexually violent history of the word slut, using the weapon of men and turning it against them could be the biggest help over the long term. Despite the assumptions that men carry surrounding the word slut, I think that the slut walk can prove that women can control their sexuality, despite it being an abstract concept. Women are fighting the idea that what women wear, what they drink and how they behave can make them targets for rape (Valenti, 2011), and no matter the method, if the method can be sustained over a long time, then I think that even such a bold move as the creation of the slut walk can eventually numb men to the sexually violent nature of the word slut, and maybe even make the term obsolete. Men have always wrongfully objectified women, and if male primary terminology can be nullified by using it against them, then hopefully slut walks can make it happen.

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The slutwalk is a very positive contribution to female empowerment as it is turning victims into survivors, changing the way that society looks at sexuality and correcting the misinterpretation that some women deserve to be sexually assaulted. Women have come a long way from in the past; fighting for the right to vote, equal opportunities and much more. And even after how far society has come, there are still people that believe that if you dress a certain way or take pride in your sexuality, that you are someone deserving to be raped. The slutwalk addresses the issue of women being to blame for being assaulted, and tries to empower women and teach society that men shouldn't rape, rather than the idea that women shouldn't get raped.

Women have always faced a double standard, especially when it comes to sexuality. If a woman is not open to sexuality then she is seen as prude, whereas if a woman is in touch with her sexuality she is seen as a slut, and there is almost never an in between. On the same token, men are often praised for being sexually active and are seen as more superior if he has more sexual experience. Therefore, the creators of the slutwalk are acknowledging this inequality in society, and choosing to address this head on, and creating a discussion. This movement has been shown to rally women together who have been similar experiences, which offers strength and empowerment. Although this movement is controversial, it still creates a discussion, which is what is necessary in order to create a shift in societal norms.

Some people, such as the women in the TVO interview, express strongly their belief that this movement, which proudly promotes the term "slut", is actually more negative than positive to this issue. These critics state that this movement open women up to ridicule and give other people permission to "slut-shame" them. Although this is a highly discussed view, it is clearly invalid, with all the social impact that has already been created. Those who believe that the slutwalk encourages objectification of women are restricted into the small bounds of thinking that impacted the creation of this movement to begin with. Believing that one cannot take back the word that is using to oppress people, it the small thinking that is related to the idea that some women deserve to be sexually assaulted because of their history or appearance.

Therefore, in conclusion, the slutwalk is causing a lot of waves but is finally addressing an issue that has really needed attention. This movement brings women together, talks about difficult subjects and plays a role in the long way that women have come to achieving equality between the genders. The other day, my friend's father said something very empowering, which is relevant to the issues that the slutwalk addresses, it was along the lines of "if all women rallied together, you could rule the

world." A concept which is very important, and is finally being appreciated, that can indeed, lead to a large change in our thinking.

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THESIS:

I believe that SlutWalks are a **positive** contribution to female empowerment. Mostly because, no matter what a women wears, she doesn't deserve to be raped, assaulted etc.

EVIDENCE:

I think we can all agree that no one, whether male or female deserves to be raped, assaulted, harassed or attacked in any other form of sexual manner. I think it's absurd to say that the SlutWalks encourage the objectification of women. If the way a women dresses is justification for an illegal way a man acts, then women should be able to act the same way, no?

ANTITHESIS:

However, I don't think the term "slut" will be used in a positive way, or in a non-harmful way for a long time, or maybe ever. I get that the organizers, and participants in the SlutWalks are trying to regain the term and maybe make it not so negative, but I just don't see this happening any time soon. Doing these SlutWalks may make awareness for the time being, but people are going to think however they like, and if they believe a women asks for something based on the way she dresses, then no feminist movement will change those peoples' minds.

SYNTHESIS:

In conclusion, I believe that SlutWalks are empowering to women more than they are damaging. I think that SlutWalks give a positive view for young girls despite what others say about how it can be damaging. I can see that, but also as a young female, I feel like knowing I have the power over my body is a very empowering thing that can only be demonstrated in certain circumstances.

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I believe with the contributions that have formed during the slut walk movement that it has led to a positive contribution to female empowerment. The first reason for why I view this statement as true is because this movement is showing that even though there are many men who call women very harsh names such as slut, that these women who are participating are not affected by these words because these women are proud to be

who they are. This to me is one of the main points in this movement; to make all women realize that they should all be proud to be who they are and not let discriminatory comments from anyone affect who they are.

Another point that I believe supports the idea that this is a positive contribution to female empowerment is because this movement is claiming that women have the right to not be raped. I feel that this is an empowering statement because the main reason for this movement beginning was due to a police officer telling the women at the University of Toronto that women should not dress certain ways because they would be more likely to become a target for sexual assault and rape. I believe that women have the right to not be raped simply because women are equal to men, it does not matter how they dress, or how they look, no one deserves to be raped, and ultimately every single person should have the right to not be raped. It is absurd to say that women who don't dress a certain way will be less likely to sexual assault and rape, women should be able to dress however they want, and be able to express themselves however they want. However, the men of society are basically limiting their freedoms because we are telling women that they have to dress a certain way to avoid something from happening to them.

However, I do believe that the slut walks are missing out on some key points that Gail Dines stresses in her article. The first point that I believe the slut walk misses out on is that they are not really educating the males of today's society, rather the slut walk is claiming that women have the right to not be raped, which I agree with, but not having some focus towards male education will not lead to much change in our society. Yes, there will obviously be some improvements for women, which I believe should have already happened, but some males as Gail Dines explains in the video that will still think that raping someone is okay, and there will still be many cases of this, if this movement fails to realize that we need to educate males. Furthermore, another reason that I believe the slut walks may not be creating the best movement for women is because once again as Gail Dines said having these movements and having the participants dress as they do it could lead to males showing up to these events and saying discriminatory things, and also acting inappropriately towards the participants.

Even though the slut walks may not fully focus on male education, that is not the point of this movement, this movement is based on securing proper rights for women and attempting to end discrimination towards women. There will always be some males that are making discriminatory comments to women and not wanting to change their view on women's rights, but that was the belief that was present around 30 years ago and should not still be in existence today.

Our society is more equal and should accept that women have the same rights as men, and this is what I believe the slut walk is trying to show to society; that women have the exact same rights as men and that they should not be discriminated against, and that ultimately women are completely equal to men. Therefore, due to the slut walk I believe that it has been a positive empowerment for women simply because they are raising awareness of the fact that women do have the same rights as men, and that they should be treated equally because this is not the eighteenth century when women were an unprivileged society, this is the twenty-first century and women should be just as equal and privileged as the men.

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“Slut” is a word that is supposed to mean someone who is sexually promiscuous. Traditionally this word is used for women who step out of narrowly defined lines of sexual behaviour (“Slut Walk” and Modern Feminism). This is a word that is typically associated with negative notions and has negative effects such as alcoholism, low self-esteem, eating disorders, etc. The SlutWalk is a movement that was co-founded by Heather Jarvis, a student in Toronto, and really started when five women in Toronto executed a march to protest sexual assault. One of the aims of this movement is to reclaim the word slut. Is to take something that has a negative association and to change it into one of empowerment. That “what women wear, what they drink or how they behave can make them a target for rape” is absolutely ridiculous. SlutWalk is a powerful movement that is aiming to change the victim blaming attached to sexual assault by encouraging and helping women to feel empowered and to speak out.

Evidence:

For years feminists have been trying to debunk the myth that “women’s clothing has some bearing on whether they will be raped” (Valenti 2011). Unfortunately, such myths still continue to exist and SlutWalk has taken it upon themselves to also tackle this myth. What makes SlutWalk different is that it is fueled by the “raw emotional and political energy of young women” (Valenti 2011). It is the women themselves who are organizing and participating to fight this myth. If people felt that this was a fight that did not have anything going for it, they would not have joined in. Instead, more than 2,000 people showed up at a SlutWalk to march around Boston Common and similar numbers have been seen in other marches (Dines and Murphy 2011). There are marches all over the world in countries like USA, Canada, and even South Africa taking over 75 different cities (Valenti 2011). If people did not feel that this was something to stand up for, then these walks would not have the numbers and global support that they do. Not only that, but the slut walk does not encourage people to dress in “revealing” outfits or risqué outfits, but you can wear whatever you feel like it. The whole point of SlutWalk is that whatever you wear, you deserve the right to be respected and to be free from sexual assault. That what a person wears should no longer be something that needs to be taken into consideration when looking at a sexual assault case. For example, when an 11-year-old girl in Texas got gang raped, the New York Times put out an article “that included a description of how the girl dressed ‘older than

her age' and wore makeup — as if either was relevant to the culpability of the 18 men accused of raping her" (Valenti 2011).

Antithesis:

But even with all this work and the support during SlutWalks the question needs to be asked, has anything really changed? This fight has been going on for years and nothing has really been achieved yet, what is going to change this time. Not only that but is the ultimate goal from this to be called a slut? Is that what we are going for ("Slut Walk" and Modern Feminism)? Also, when looking at the issue of sexual assault one has to look at the bigger issues at a macro level. It's more than just the word slut or what someone is wearing, we have to look at the men in society who are causing this. There is also the fact that how can you reclaim a word that was never yours to begin with. Slut was a word that was given by men to women and to try and take it back would be to play into the hands of the patriarchy. You are giving the men exactly what they want, a bunch of women in one place in revealing clothing ("Slut Walk" and Modern Feminism). "Women need to find ways to create their own authentic sexuality, outside of male-defined terms like slut" (Dines and Murphy 2011). "Women need to take to the streets – but not for the right to be called 'slut'. Women should be fighting for liberation from culturally imposed myths about their sexuality that encourage gendered violence" (Dines and Murphy 2011).

Synthesis:

Like mentioned earlier, the SlutWalk is not about women dressing more provocatively, it is that women should be able to wear whatever they want without fear. SlutWalk is trying to fight against shame, that who you are, what you do, if you feel good about it and if it is consensual it is not shameful ("Slut Walk" and Modern Feminism). Also, it needs to be taken into account that not all men are rapists, in reality it is just a small portion of men who are rapists that continue to do so repeatedly. Not only that, but SlutWalk is doing more work than just trying to reclaim the word "slut". People are so fixated on the word that they are losing sight of all the other work they are doing regarding education, male sexuality, etc ("Slut Wall" and Modern Feminism). If the whole point of SlutWalk was to encourage people to dress more risqué then maybe it would be objectifying women. But SlutWalk encourages people to wear anything that they feel comfortable in, whether than be sweatpants or a miniskirt. It is not about taking on the label exactly, but to say that such a label will not be used as a weapon to hurt me and that everyone is standing up against this in solidarity. It is women empowering women and people empowering people. Whether or not it is effective in changing the approach to sexual assault is a different topic, but no one can deny that it has encouraged multiple women to take a stand and be proud of who they are. To not live in fear of being blamed for sexual assault based on what I wear and to move from a stance of victim to survivor, if that means taking on the word slut along the way, then I do not think many women would disagree with me in saying just call me a slut.

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Thesis: Slutwalk, in my opinion, is in a neutral stance: it's not positive in the way that it fails to revolutionise society's conception of women, but it's not negative in the way that it protests the objectification of women. Slutwalk, however, at this point in time, is successful in spreading awareness of the issue of female objectification and freedom of expression.

Evidence: The reasons for Slutwalk's inability to revolutionise the views of women in modern society are numerous, but one of the major reasons appears to be the history of society's fundamental outlook on women and socially-appropriate clothing. Society still deals with certain Victorian-era aspects in that women should dress modestly, covering certain body parts adequately and preventing the primal instincts of men to indulge themselves onto women. This results in experiences like Jessica Valenti's journalistic experience, where she explains, "students will often say they don't believe that a woman's attire makes it justifiable for someone to rape her, but — and there almost always is a 'but' — shouldn't women know better than to dress in a suggestive way?" (Valenti, 2011) In other words, the students are conditioned by society into these views, planting them deep in their own minds and implicitly living these values out. Therefore, because of the existence and prominence of these views, Slutwalk's effectiveness in revolutionising the conception of women is hindered in this point in time.

However, simultaneously, Slutwalk does not encourage the objectification of women. Women who participated in the Slutwalks purposely dress in suggestive clothing, a direct attack on the objectification views of men. With messages like "My dress is not a yes" and deliberate usage of the term "sluts", participants directly combat objectification and presents a voluntary message of freedom of personal expression into the involuntary subconscious of observers. Thus, they directly discourage objectification and spread mass awareness of their cause into various cities across North America.

Antithesis: Both optimists and pessimists in the Slutwalk debate would attempt to sway my opinion into one side or another (and this would be my first written reflection that there is more than one party that disagrees with my neutral stance).

Optimists would point towards the attention gained around women objectification (Paikin, 2011). The very fact that people are spreading awareness about the issue has initiated the first step in changing societal views. They also point to the deliberate use of the term "slut", being an empowering statement that can be use as a statement of

"reverse objectification", where women can exert their influence on society simply through their clothing styles.

Pessimists would point toward the failures of using the term "slut", which apparently weakens the effectiveness of Slutwalk, since women impose themselves to a demeaning term in order to spread their point. Pessimists also point toward the notion that Slutwalks are additional opportunities for observers to further satisfy their objectified views, simply having to look at the protesters. Thus, Slutwalks backfire on their main purpose.

Synthesis: Both sides have convincing arguments, but in the end, their arguments (in my opinion) cancel each other out. Although the opportunity for further objectification is existent, this does not represent the full population of observers. Some observers can see the power of the protesters' statements through their attire, understanding the importance and awareness of the issue. On the other hand, although Slutwalks have spread awareness over the issue, this is only the first step in a long struggle that, like the civil rights movement of the 1960s, is difficult, uncertain, and risky. Like all social movements, one cannot deny the risk of failure that exists in Slutwalks, the failure of getting the public's mass approval and agreement on the issue.

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Thesis

I personally believe that slut walk is a positive contribution to female empowerment, even though the name of the movement might not be one that all women would want to be associated with. SlutWalk wants to let everyone know that women should not be blamed for their own victimization. They want to spread the message that women should not be blamed for rape just because of what they wear, what they drink, or how they act. This movement empowers women to explore and not be ashamed of their sexuality, but at the same time, it causes problems for women who do not want to be associated with the word "slut."

Evidence

SlutWalk started when a police officer told students at a campus safety information session at Osgoode Hall to avoid dressing like "sluts" in order to avoid being sexually assaulted. Heather Jarvis co-founded SlutWalk, which aimed to change the way people think about women (TVO, 2011). SlutWalk has become one of the most successful feminist actions in the past twenty years. The group wants to show that no matter what women wear, drink, or how they choose to present themselves, they do not deserve to be sexually assaulted and that all women deserve to be safe from sexual violence.

SlutWalk is a very controversial name, which is why the organizers chose it. SlutWalk attracted media attention because of its controversial name. The group wanted to do something other than be angry about the way things are. A hundred people were expected to join the SlutWalk, but a rally of more than three thousand came and participated (Valenti, 2011).

Antithesis

According to research, the label “slut” has negative consequences especially for younger girls. According to Gail Dines and Wendy Murphy, the term is very deeply rooted in the patriarchal view of women’s sexuality, which makes reclaiming the word so close to impossible. The sad reality is that no matter what women do, there will be people who will blame them for their own victimisation. Encouraging women to be even more “sluttish” would not help this reality. Women in society now feel that they have to look or act “slutty” in order to be valued by others and according to Dines, an anti-pornography activist, this is because the primary form of sexual education for young men now is pornography and this is how the media portrays how women should be. This causes depression, eating disorders, self-mutilation, and many other things for young women. Murphy and Dines believe that women need to take action, but not for the right to be called a “slut.” Rather, they should fight for “liberation from culturally imposed myths about their sexuality that encourage gendered violence” (Dines & Murphy, 2011). The word ‘slut’ also has a different impact on women of colour as well as on poor women. It somewhat shows white privilege because not all women can afford to be labeled a slut. Dines and Murphy also believe that SlutWalk celebrates “porn culture” by encouraging women to dress in provocative clothing (Valenti, 2011).

Synthesis

Not all women who participated in the SlutWalk dressed in provocative clothing. Some showed up in just jeans and a t-shirt. Organizers told participants to wear whatever they wanted because the point that they wanted to show was that “no matter what women wear, they have a right not to be raped” (Valenti, 2011). On the TVO debate on SlutWalk, Susannah Breslin, a blogger said that many people have different points of view on the topic of female empowerment. To some it is about reclaiming the word “slut” and to others it is something else. There are many solutions and many different forms of expression of female empowerment. People have various ways of explaining what SlutWalk’s intention is, but the way I like to look at it is the way Jaclyn Friedman explained it. According to her, SlutWalk is about standing in solidarity to fight the word “slut” from being used as a weapon. The SlutWalk shows that labelling and calling women sluts should no longer be an excuse to victimize them. SlutWalk allows women to reject the use of the word as a weapon and it shows that women will no longer let the word have any power over them (TVO, 2011). Female empowerment has really gone a

long way. Laws have also been changed to protect women and to help them be more confident in reporting incidents of sexual assaults. In the past, the sexual history of a victim could be brought up at preliminary inquiries and trials in order to discourage victims from wanting to testify, but Parliament has made changes to the Criminal Code to forbid the victim's sexual history from being brought up, except in specific circumstances (Sexassault.ca). This shows how society is beginning to accept expression of female sexuality. At the end of the day, it should not matter what women wear or drink, how they act, or what they choose to call themselves. Every one has the right not to be sexually abused. Therefore, SlutWalk can be a very positive contribution to female empowerment.

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Thesis: I support the ideas behind the Slut Walk movement but I disagree with the idea that slut should be used as an empowering word. The world slut is so deeply engraved in our mind as a negative that trying to change everyone's idea of the word is almost impossible. I think a better solution would be to rally behind the idea that there shouldn't need to be any words attached to the way women dress or act.

Evidence: the empowerment of the word slut could have huge negative influences on the youth in our society. Children in our society are exposed to sexuality from a very early age from entertainment, advertisements, etc. Because of this, young girls already feel the need to sexualize them selves in inappropriate ways in order to feel 'desirable'. If you were to add the idea that girls need to be sluts in order to be empowered than you are just making the situation of sexualization of youth even worse.

I think it would instead be better educate youth from an early age that women should be accepted for whomever they want to be or however they want to dress whether it be "slutty" or not. This negates the problem of past context of the word slut and allows openness to the idea that no one should be judged for who they are.

Antithesis: One could argue that without changing the meaning of the word it will always be used in a negative light by at least some people, and I agree. It would be nice if we could just add a different meaning to the word, but our world is just far too big to collectively agree on changing the definition. As much as black youth have tried to change the "n-word" to have a positive meaning, there are still those who use it with the most evil intent and this will likely always be the case with the world slut. Slut shaming is awful and we should do everything we can to prevent it from happening on a large scale but it is unrealistic to expect everyone to agree.

Synthesis: It is amazing that young women (and some men) across the continent have all come together to try and make a change in regards to slut shaming, rape, and the word 'slut' but I think the movements mission is misguided and would be better handled without trying to empower the world slut.

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As a women myself, it is liberating to know that people are standing up for our rights as women not to be viewed as objects of sexualisation and the reason for our own sexual assault, however I am skeptical that "slut" walks are the way to do go. I am completely unmotivated by this movement, and this is largely due to, among other things, its name.

I feel much like Gail from *Slutwalks and Modern Feminism* does in response to the movement's title. For example Gail said, "Men are going to love this idea [of calling ourselves sluts]." This does not make me feel empowered. In fact, if men were to watch me walk down the street holding signs that read "slut", surrounded by people dressed in revealing clothing (or no clothing at all) I would feel objectified. Secondly, the term itself is saturated with the very ideal we are trying to veer away from as women. For instance, as Wendy and Gail point out, the term slut is "so saturated with the ideology that female sexual energy deserves punishment" (*The Guardian*). This shows how the very name of the movement is the polar opposite of its goal for female sexual liberation. Finally, using this word is empowering underestimates its harmful effects. For instance, statistics show that girls who are called sluts have a higher chance of depression, alcoholism, eating disorders, and so on (*Youtube, Slutwalks and Modern Feminism*). This shows that it is not liberating for us to use the word to refer to ourselves in order to prove to men that the word should not be used as an excuse, but instead it is hurting countless young women going through adolescence.

On the other hand, this movement is the most successful women's action generated in less than a few months for more than 20 years. The movement advocates for women who have been victims of rape and told it was their fault, whether a matter

of their dress, or behaviour. For instance, an 11-year old girl from Texas was ganged raped and the *New York Times* issued an article that criticized her for dressing older than she was, and that that may have been what led to the rape. This proves just how vital the slut walks are to the empowerment of women because we are being told that the culpability of men is our own faults. Another reason I believe this movement is one that is empowering is because of the solidarity in its infrastructure. No longer are women afraid to stand up for something that has been hushed for so many years. For example, Jaclyn Friedman said, "if you call one of us that we're all going to stand together." (*Youtube, Slutwalks and Modern Feminism*). This empowerment that the women participating in the protests feel ignites us all in some way, whether it was a teacher telling you your dress was inappropriate and must be changed, or the police telling you the assault was your fault.

In conclusion, although it is hard to not feel empowered by this movement, there are certain aspects that prevent me from feeling fully supportive of it. I remember the teachers in my public high school telling us girls that exposing our shoulders, a bit of cleavage, or anything above our knee was inappropriate because it would provoke male attention. I remember hating this idea that I couldn't dress the way I wanted to (which wasn't even anywhere near provocative in the first place) for the sake of the boys at our school; that it was in my best interest. I completely disagree with that ideology, however I also disagree tremendously with calling these protests slut walks. I think it is objectifying and degrading, and I'm not sure if this is the most liberating and appropriate way to attract attention for a cause I completely support.

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Thesis

The slut walk does not empower women it solely glamourizes a word that has never been anything but a degrading insult. The slut walk also does not empower the female but unfairly diminish all males instead. Slut has never been a glorious word. Yet Heather Jarvis wants to reclaim it and empower it. like the word "queer". But there is a major difference between empowering the word queer and the word slut. There was a time when queer didn't mean homosexual. The dictionary definition of queer is "deviating from what is expected or normal; strange" where are the definition of slut is "a women who is sexually promiscuous". It makes sense to empower some one for being abnormal and different from others. But it's very different to empower a word that means to have many sexual partners. Slut is to it's roots a demeaning word to all. I know many people including any who may read this will say that I've missed the point of the slut walk, and to be fair I might have. But that's only because that's message I receive from the protests, and I doubt I am the only one. How can you empower Woman when the point you are trying to make and the message you send don't align.

Antithesis

Even with the confusion created by the message the Slut walk sends. The point they're trying to make people understand is quite logical, and pure. Underneath all the protests and shouting what the slut walk is trying to tell people all people young and old is that it should be ok to be freely expressive. That in the patriarchal society we have developed, people should remain tolerant and almost encourage women to express

themselves. If a woman chooses to dress in a manner that draws attention to her body and her sexuality. She shouldn't be labeled for her ability to be proud of herself. In Genesis 1:27 it states that "God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." We were all built in the image of god and should be allowed to be proud for it.

Synthesis

Women should be able to be proud in there skin and love themselves and there bodies. But the slut walk uses that belief like a veil behind there true purpose. The slut walk is merely a feminist pawn to demean men in order to make them to look like animals. A large part of the speakers and organizers and even protesters are female. yet as stated in the video sexual assaults are across the board affecting both genders. Yet there is no reach out by the slut walk to assaulted males. Instead they blame seem to have an attitude to blame all males for the crimes only a portion of the total population does.

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In my opinion 'slut walks' are not a positive contribution to female empowerment it leads to the objectification of women. I understand that women don't want to be objectified and want to wear whatever they want and not be criticized for it. I definitely do not agree with the terms used by the police officer mentioned in the *Washington Post* article, "...a police officer told students at Toronto's York University in January that if women want to avoid rape, they shouldn't dress like 'sluts.'" But I also

don't agree with the other extreme that is discussed in *The Guardian*, "that celebrating the word "slut", and promoting sluttishness in general, will help women achieve full autonomy over their sexuality." Is it really too much to ask to find a happy medium?

I understand that people want to wear whatever they want and I agree. It is not fair for society to demand that we all wear proper uniforms whenever we step outside our door. We live in a 'free country' and we are guaranteed the right to express ourselves, which includes our clothes. But there are standards. There are limitations in everything! You also have the right to free speech but as the famous quote goes on "You can't yell fire in a crowded theater."

Why is it so hard to find a happy medium? Let's just all agree to dress appropriately for the time and place. If you're going to a black tie event don't show up in a golf shirt or sundress and flip-flops. If you're going to a grocery store do you really need to wear your bikini? If you are going to work where follow the dress code. At my work that is the uniform you are given on your first day. If you work in an office building like my parents do business casual is a must. Why can we not find a happy medium for women and men where there is no clearly defined dress code? Is that really what this country needs?

The world we live in, no matter how unfortunate, you are judged based on your appearance. Is it fair? Of course not but that's just the way it is. I'm not saying that anyone deserves to be assaulted for any reason, ever. But is it really too much to ask for

people to dress appropriately for society? Men *and* women. To me this means boys - please pull up your pants. No one wants or needs to see your boxers or your muscle shirts. Ladies? Please, let's keep our shirts and skirts to appropriate lengths as a teacher once put it, "it should be like an essay – long enough to cover the subject."

In my humble opinion this is just blown way out of proportion. I went to a catholic school and we had dress codes not of all of which I agreed with but I followed them anyway. There has got to be some middle ground in the world of wardrobe. People should wear whatever they want to in the comfort of their own home. And in public? Same thing. But keep it appropriate for society. It does make me sad that I feel the need to clarify this and to a certain extent I see what the organizers of Slutwalk's are saying but I am not ok with assault or violence of any type. Against men who choose to put on a dress instead of a pantsuit or a women who wants to wear a pantsuit and not a dress. But as long as the dress is a reasonable length, which means it covers everything it is designed to, I don't care who wears it or why.