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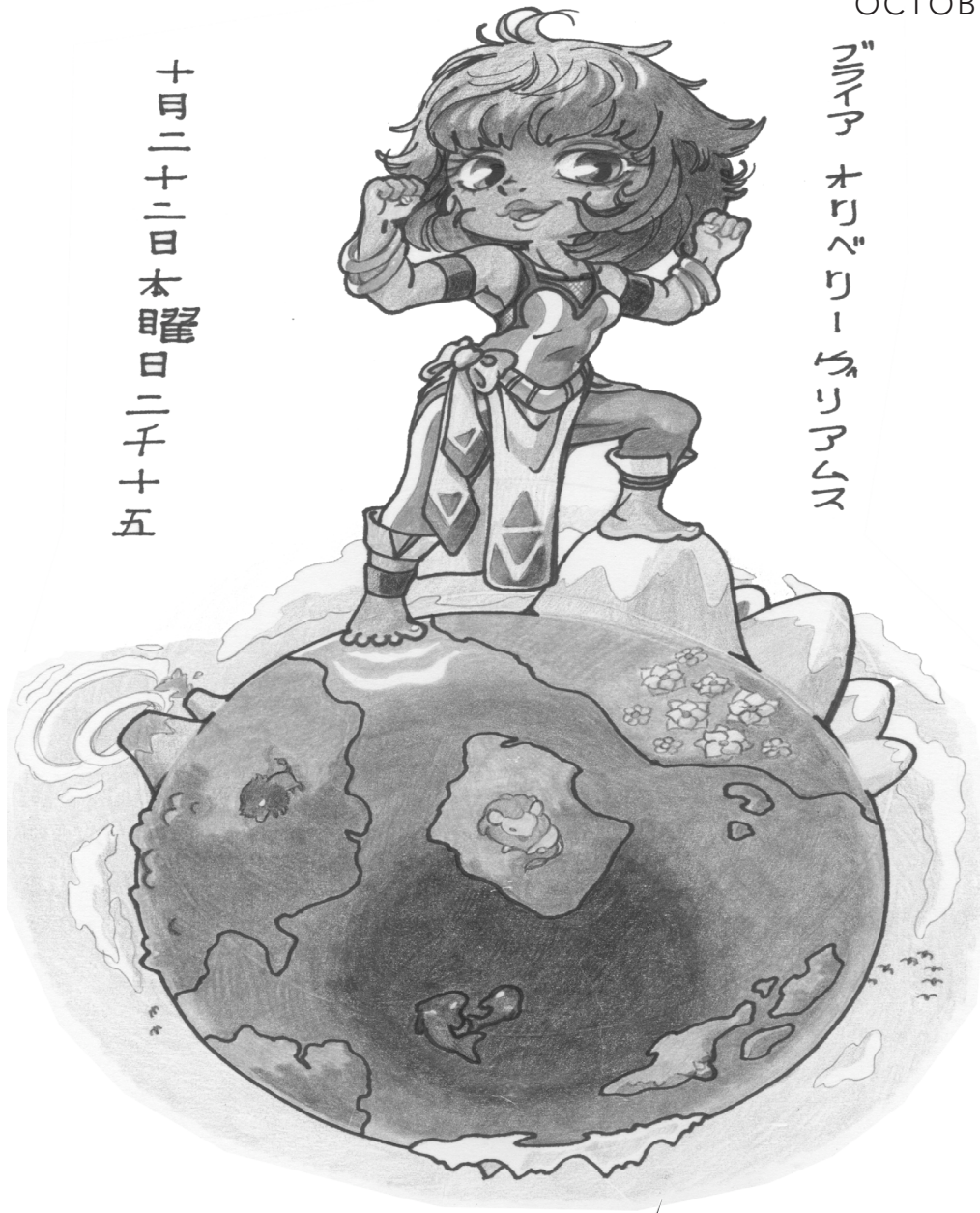


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Student recounts strong feminist roots



news editor
NIYATI SHAH

As a sophomore in high school, I was exposed to the term the “cult of domesticity.” I stared, incredulously, at my history textbook, rereading the same definition repetitively: the idea that the role of middle-class women should be based on the management of the home, children, and servants. Yes, this concept originated in the late 1800s, but the mere idea of a woman bound to the suffocating premises of a home astounded me. I come from a family of women whose lives went beyond the safe haven of home. My great grandmother spent her hours in the fields, serving as the literal bread winner for a family of five children and a blind husband, in addition to managing the household.

My grandmother woke up at 4 am every morning to prepare lunches, clean the house, and catch the local train to the school at which she taught (might I add, she was the only female teacher). My mother, an immigrant from the clamorous, enterprising streets of Mumbai, arrived in America with a dollar in one hand, a passport in another, and a seemingly impossible vision: to develop a living in the land of the free. I am aware that women have been disadvantaged and frowned upon since the beginning of time. I am aware that women have been confined to the home for much of history. However, if even my lineage has defied these stereotypes, then clearly, womankind has progressed. Yes, as a feminist myself, I champion expansion of rights, embracing one’s identity, and redefining social hierarchies. Feminism is now something that women of any racial background and socioeconomic level, can unite for. More often than not, our progress is superseded by the issues that we face. Sometimes, we must pause and take a breath and assess how far women have come. The Grimke sisters spoke out against the evils of slavery and the restriction of women, despite the constant harrowing by males during the 19th century. Elizabeth Cady Stanton cleverly

crafted the Declaration of Sentiments based on the Declaration of Independence, demanding that women’s rights be acknowledged by society. The 1963 Equal Pay Act outlawed the act of paying unequal wages to men and women of equal job status. In 1983, Sally Ride became the first woman to go to space. On July 5, the U.S. women’s soccer team won the FIFA World Cup. Nowadays, however, women are bound to the premise of the work place. Often, one wonders, if today’s feminism is headed in the correct direction. Mainstream feminism encourages women to “lean in” towards the corporate world. Yes, female entrepreneurship fulfills the feminist ideal. Yet, as we trumpet women to increasingly take on the challenges of the work force, they, once again, fall victim to the idea that labor is gold. Do we take for granted the rights for which our feminist predecessors toiled? In an effort to push women to the forefront of success through increased work hours, decreased job security, and less family time, today’s feminists are overlooking the mission of the ideology: equality for all. We are gradually succumbing to the “cult of enterprise.”



staff writer
MEGAN GHERSI

Columnist thinks “offensive” jokes aren’t funny

Since the beginning, there have been people who thought they were better than others. Whether it was because of the job they had, the things they owned, or what they believed in, they looked down on those “not like them.” I ask you: what does that mean? Last time I opened my biology book, it looked like everyone was made of the same stuff. We are all alike. However, people still seem to think that if you don’t believe what they do, if you don’t do what they do, you are less than they are. To respect someone is to respect their right to their beliefs; it doesn’t mean you have to believe the same things. Respecting other’s beliefs means not making fun of them for it. Unfortunately it seems, in our culture, it’s a very hard concept to grasp. No “just kidding” or “I’m just messing with you.” Poking fun at others beliefs isn’t fun for the person being poked. This may be another hard concept to grasp, but you don’t know everything. You don’t know all the details of why someone believes something, or what their beliefs entail, unless you actually do share them. Even then, not everyone is the same. Not every Muslim is a terrorist. Not every Mormon is a polygamist. Not every Hispanic is illegal. There are many different denominations of the same religion. This is also true of ethnic groups, and of people in general. Just because one group does one thing, doesn’t mean all the other groups have, or will. Stop using the actions of a few to categorize the masses. I cannot tell you how many times I have heard people talking about what to do about “the Muslim problem,” or similar things. It is not a problem that your neighbor believes something different than you. What happened to “agree to disagree”? What made people expressing their differences a bad thing? People happened. People changed. We became afraid of differences. We started to see them as a bad thing. We started categorizing people based on those differences. One aspect of a person doesn’t define a person. Being religious or non-religious is one thing about a person. There are a million more aspects that make up an individual. You can never really know a person completely. Don’t assume. Don’t generalize. Don’t stereotype.