

The Double Minority

By Joy McNeil

Since Plymouth Rock so conveniently landed on every person of color, race continues to be a strong, dividing factor.

The Civil Rights Movement blazed a trail to begin working toward equality. The race struggle has been and will continue to be a strong force throughout the world.

man with her to get a fair deal on a car? Who said God was a man? Why aren't we learning about more women pioneers in our schools? Why aren't there more company-sponsored day cares and supplements for women who want a career and family? Why is it considered normal to see scantily clad women in music videos or to hear degrading lyrics on the radio? Why

Many black women are raising children alone. Now, black women are overwhelmingly plagued with AIDS. There are many babies having babies. Many young black women have to go to work to support their families, haunted by a vicious cycle of blue-collar labor and little job choice or advancement.

There is a struggle to be taken seriously in the world, and there have not been enough studies conducted about black women's experience. Moreover, history seems to skip the contributions of black women as if they do not exist or just are not relevant to the fabric of society.

Many women put their issues aside to fight for the race, and many women don't understand how their experience is unique and important to the race. What can be learned from a woman is how to survive in a society where your physique can be the deciding factor in getting a job or being an outcast. A woman can tell you how she survived watching family members go to jail while she stayed at home, still a kid herself, and raised her siblings. A woman can express how she deals with seeing her brothers walk on by because she isn't light enough, submissive enough, or the right color all together.

Inside the race there are many issues that cannot be ignored such as self-hate and classism. However, womanhood is an issue that blacks tend to stray from discussing, unless there is a criticism. It's as if womanhood is a condition, and manhood is the standard.

Therefore the original question, "Harder struggle: Being black or being a woman?", is not one with a clear-cut answer. It is my experience that being a black woman shapes my experience as a person. I can't talk about being black without talking about being a woman. Both form the core of my existence.

The trick to the debate over race is not to assume that everyone has the same experience, because a black woman's experience in society is different from a black man's experience. Though different, they should be equally valued and not broken up to cause more unnecessary divisions. Let's work on strengthening the race through understanding and appreciating different experiences.

Black



Female



Blacks have worked tirelessly in their efforts to elevate from second-class citizenship. But the question remains: What about women?

At an October Black Student Movement meeting, the Celebration of Black Womanhood Committee did skits about issues affecting black women. One of the questions that surfaced was, "Harder struggle: Being black or being a woman?" On the surface, the question seems confusing. Because I am a black woman, how can I look at the two separately? However, it's a question worth exploring, since we, as a people, seem to get too caught up in the race that we sometimes overlook or oversimplify gender struggles.

Questions: How many women professors are on this campus (T.A.'s do not count)? Why do people look down on women who advocate feminism? Why should a woman have to resort to taking a

don't police ever respond quickly or efficiently to calls of spousal abuse? Why do young women have to resort to having babies to find love? Why are women still being paid 70 cents on the dollar for what a man in the same line of work makes? Why are the overwhelming majority of welfare recipients women? Why can't a husband take his wife's last name?

The questions were posed for the simple fact that many people think that women have no struggle. There are many struggles that women face every day. The struggle itself comes from lack of choices or control over decision-making at the highest levels.

Black women, in particular, have been plagued by the questions I posed. We are being heavily shunned because of our so-called 'attitude' problem. Yet, when a man goes home to mamma and hears the same 'attitude', she's considered a strong woman.