

Reflection and Manifestations of Women in Literature: An Overview

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Abstract – Literature is manifestation of our reality, which regardless of individual views it mirrors social manners, then women’s changing roles, be they emotional, social, and political, in literature and life must not to be buried. Though writings about females by males may be suspect, all literature, even women’s a writings about women may also need to be re-read. As Susan Carillon asserts in her essay, “The Fiction of Fiction, “Women internalize the male idea of the feminine and create themselves in the shape of that idea”. Women have held lightly to several role models as their guides. While male characters have been free reign to be and become what they like, even to fail if they choose, women characters have been written to play and replay the same themes, limited as they are. Women are forced to rise above being a woman.

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INTRODUCTION

Feminism’s key assumption is that gender roles are pre mediated and the woman is trained to fit into three characters. It means that roles like ‘daughter’ or ‘mother’ are not inherent but social because the woman has to be trained to think, talk, act in particular role. Feminism is a political position. The term feminism can be used to describe a political, cultural or economic movement aimed at establishing equal rights and legal protection for women. Much of an individual’s life today is shaped by the culture that he or she is born in and lives through, acquiring cultural values, attitudes and behavior. Cultural texts naturalize the repression of women through their stereotypical characterization of women as weak, seductress, sexual object, and procreating device. Feminist theories themselves against various structures and inter relationship of power - the state, the church, law and the academy which they see as patriarchal.

WRITERS THAT DETERMINED PROBLEM OF WOMEN INEQUALITY IN SOCIETY

In her essay A Vindications of the Rights of Women, Wollstonecraft says, Education is integral to the development of individual identity. The need for education is even more compelling in the case of women than it is for men. When women are young and ought to be rationally educated they are taught only superficial graces to please their future husbands. As the opening pages of chapter six of Vindication portrays, Wollstonecraft relies heavily on the primacy of reason and on associationism. In Virginia Woolf’s A Room of One’s own, she asks for economic independence not as an end in itself but as a

means to end. Without it patriarchy has yet another weapon with which it can enforce its dictum that a woman must not write. My reservation about A Room of one’s own relates to its applicability to South Asian Culture such as that of India. The notion of separate space for women, whether guaranteed by Purdah or a private setting room has been a common place for centuries. Kamla Das’s “An Introduction “poses necessary and confessed question. It shows how in post-Independence India –to be a woman is to know that structure of power operate away from one self “I Don’t know politics but I know the names of those in power ,and can, repeat them like days of the week or names of the month beginning with Nehru...”

A TIME LINE FOR THE TWENTIETH CENTURY FEMINIST THOUGHT FEMINIST THOUGHT WOULD BE AS FOLLOWS:

1830-1920: First wave- Suffrage movement, Civil movement. 1960: Second wave - Broadened the debate to a wide range of issues: sexuality, family, the work place. 1980: Third Wave – Intersectionality, womanism, sex positivity, eco feminism, postmodern feminism. 2012: Fourth wave- Associated with the use of social media.

The relation between women and their oppressors, men, is the only form of bondage that has its origin in biological fact rather than in a historical process.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FIRST AND THIRD WORLD FEMINISM

Western feminist tend to have their own perspective of how 'Third World' Women are being oppressed, but this is actually determined when it comes to formulating actual solutions to help 'Third world' women. Since a majority of feminist are while women, this creates a large lack of global perspective in the feminist movement. The Western feminist movement is also prejudiced to over generalizing the many different identities of women worldwide.

Barbara Smith's "Toward a Black Feminist Criticism" complains about Showalter's female writing. Smith quoting Showalter's sole mention of such writing "Furthermore there are other literary sub cultures whose history offers a precedent for feminist theory is racist." While the marginalization of black 'above the line' talent from T.V and Radio occupied several column inches in newspapers in 2015(e.g. Bakare, 2015), the question of ethnic minority exclusion from cultural participation has received less sustained attention in the academic literature.

KEY CONCERNS OF FEMINIST THEORIES IN THE CONTEXT OF READING AND WRITING

Traditionally women have used short story which requires a brief absence only from work, and a less formal or classical education which have frequently been all they can afford. Feminist theories try to talk over the cannon and rescue it from patriarchy by helping readers scan texts, genres or movements so as to relentlessly make visible the components of gender and gender bias in the academy which has so far tried to conceal them. The best known articulation of this problem comes from Elizabeth Barrett Browning a Victorian poet who said in 1845" England has had many learned women...and yet where are the poetess?...I look everywhere for grandmother and see none. The Cultural stereotypes generated by literature are shown up in all their impoverishment. The Restoration cult of rake is shown to do unlimited damage. Ultimately The reformed rake is shown to make the best husband. He preserves his composure and wins the hand by rich and virtuous heroine. Further, the novel of the age of sensibility had further complicated matters by re using the stereotype of rake with a preserve twist.

CHALLENGES IN TODAY'S ERA

Education Sexual Harassment inadequate maternal and infant health care Sex Slavery underrepresented in politics family conflicts Insufficient Training Programs.

CONCLUSION

Worldwide, the picture is bad. The world Health Organization estimates that 35% of women

internationally have experienced violence or sexual violence in their lifetime. The International Center for Research on Women estimates that there are over 70 million child brides worldwide. Globally, as many as 38% of female homicides are committed by an intimate partner. A 2015 UN report found that over the past 20 years, some countries have made great strides in gender equality, with more girls having access to education, increased women's participation in the workforce, and impressive gains in women's representation in government. India's first Prime Minister well said that "You can tell the Condition of a nation by looking at the states of its women. Women today are more writing to take up activities that were once considered the preserve.

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