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A REVIEW ON CONCEPT OF WHITE FEMINISM

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ABSTRACT

The second wave of American women's liberation was often unaware of the paths in its theories, and its political practice failed to adequately address the common concerns of women of color and ethnicity in the United States and overseas. It was also unconcerned with how it looked to many in the younger generation as a harsh and disciplined women's emancipation. It repeated counter-talks as a consequence of such susceptible sides, which ultimately undermined its authority. The new thesis of the third wave, on the other hand, embraced a more diverse and polyvocal women's emancipation that charmed many who felt confined or restricted inside the previous wave. This fresh discussion, based on differentiation, dissected and decentred the following wave's ideas, providing improved methods for understanding and restricting.

KEYWORDS: *Ethnicity, Feminism, Liberation, Women's.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The first recorded usage of the term Feminism in the English language was in the 1880s, when it was coined by French feminists concerned with women's political rights. Feminism was originally associated with socialist and militant movements in Europe, and it was for this reason that American suffragists sought to separate suffragism from Feminism[1]. 'The right to vote is not founded on differences between the sexes or on hostility of one sex against another,' according to a 1909 article, which also depicted Feminists as people who 'wish to impose womanly characteristics on the males.'

When Martha Weinman Lear's essay The Second Feminist Wave appeared in the New York Times in 1968, people started to speak about feminism as a series of waves. Feminism, once thought to be as dead as the Polish question, is now again a topic, according to Lear. The Second Feminist Wave, according to proponents, arose after the joyful triumph of suffrage and eventually vanished into the sandbar of Togetherness[2].

Second-wave feminism focused on problems of equality and discrimination from the 1960s through the 1980s. The second-wave motto, "The Personal is Political," recognized the indissolubility of women's cultural and political disparities and urged women to see how their personal lives reproduced sexist power systems. Betty Friedan was a key figure in the second wave of feminism. Her book The Feminine Mystique, published in 1963, ridiculed the notion that women could achieve a fundamental sense of success only via childrearing and housework[3].

Friedan's book sparked the modern women's movement in 1963, forever altering the social fabric of the United States and nations across the globe, according to her New York Times obituary. It is generally regarded as one of the most compelling nonfiction books of the twentieth century. Friedan believes that women's problems are simply the result of dishonest and uncultured ideas that force them to find identity in their lives via their spouses and children. Women lose their own identities in the family as a result of this.

Many of Friedan's theories were already being discussed by academics and feminist thinkers, thus The Feminine Mystique was hardly groundbreaking in its thought. Its reach, on the other hand, was revolutionary. It ended up in the hands of housewives, who passed it on to their friends, who in turn passed it on to a whole chain of educated middle-class white women with lovely houses and children. And it gave them permission to be enraged.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 The Second Wave: The Women's Liberation Movement's Uprising:

The second-wavers' high-pitched voice, ideas, and deeds held the thesis that the personal is political. The concept is difficult to trace back to any particular lady, although Carol Hanisch carefully disseminated it. The feminists would go on to argue that seemingly insignificant issues like sex, abortion access, relationships, and domestic labor were in fact universal and radical, and essential to the struggle for women's equality.

Unlike the first wave, second-wave feminism sparked significant hypothetical and theoretical debate regarding the origins of women's oppression, the nature of gender, and the family's role. In 1970, Kate Millett's Sexual Politics was a best-seller, and in it, she broadened the definition of politics to include all power-structured interactions, and she proposed that the personal was really political. In the same year, Shulamith Firestone, a founder of the New York Radical Feminists, wrote ‘The Dialectic of Sex,' claiming that love robbed women by establishing personal manacles between them and the men they loved, men who were also their persecutors.

Germaine Greer, an Australian residing in London, wrote The Female Eunuch a year later, arguing that women's sexual suppression deprives them of the creative energy they need to be self-sufficient and happy. This trend began in the United States of America and eventually extended to other Western nations[4].

The First Wave was primarily concerned with the suffragette fight for the right to vote, while the Second Wave was more concerned with both public and private injustices. Legislative actions were also used to demarcate this period. In 1961, the Food and Drug Administration authorized an oral contraceptive pill, which was a significant step toward allowing women to pursue professions rather than being pushed into family life.

The essential link between women's struggle and what is usually understood as class struggle, as the Chicago Women's Liberation Union (CWLU) put it. Not all of a woman's efforts are necessarily anti-capitalist... All those who want to develop the working class's social and cultural autonomy are inextricably connected to the fight for women's liberation....

As a result, the liberation movement won several major legislative and judicial victories: The Equal Pay Act of 1963 theoretically prohibited the wage disparity between men and women; a series of landmark Supreme Court cases in the 1960s and 1970s granted married and unmarried women the right to use birth control; Title IX guaranteed women's educational equality; and, in 1973, Griswold v. Connecticut6 and Roe v. Wade established women's reproductive freedom.

Former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt presided over a Presidential Commission on the Status of Women established by the Kennedy administration. Paid maternity leave, access to education, and excellent childcare were all recommended by the commission on gender disparity in its report. In 1961, a group called Women Strike for Peace organized 50,000 women to oppose nuclear weapons and contaminated milk. A broad sense of unity among women striving for equality may be seen throughout the Second Wave. It also expresses the idea of many kinds of feminism. Radical feminism was popular, which advocated for the abolition of male dominance and the questioning of all gender norms.

Although the Second Wave was a very effective campaign that resulted in many legislative and cultural triumphs that led to greater equality, it was not without flaws.

2.2 Feminism in a Variety of Forms:

Women's tyranny is carefully linked to Marxist concepts of exploitation, dominance, and labor in socialist feminism. Socialist feminists believe that women are held back by their unequal status in the workplace and at home.

Post-World War II feminism, known as socialist feminism, recognized the repressive character of a consumerist culture and perceived a link between gender and racial inequality, similar to Marxism. Socialist feminism was never structurally capable of forming cross-class and inter-racial groups. However, we should not use it as the only basis for evaluating its achievements and failures. The existence of ethnically distinct feminist organizations enhanced the overall effect of the women's movement, rather than diminishing it[5].

The Second Wave may be defined as a sense of all-purpose solidarity among women striving for equality. It was also the birthplace of a variety of feminisms. Radical feminism was rife, calling for the abolition of male dominance and the questioning of all gender norms. Ecofeminism was widely acknowledged. It linked environmental justice and maintenance to women's freedom and rights.

2.3 Women of Color Are a Travesty:

Feminism's second wave, which began in the late 1960s and lasted until the mid-1980s. “White, middle-class, heterosexual women continued to dominate the narrative on the goals, ideologies, and strategies of the second wave, according to Laughlin, and the movement was massively disparaged for being excluding of the many other kinds of women,” according to Laughlin. These second-wave exclusions are at the heart of White Feminism.

Feminism manifests itself in various ways in different people, as seen above. Many women may not see their activities as feminist since they are not conscious advocacy, but rather a natural part of their daily lives. On a daily basis, women defy the limitations imposed by society via the skills they demonstrate in order to live and flourish. Non-white Feminists have multiple selves beyond gender, including color, class, ability, religion, and sexual orientation, which overlap and overlay in ways that are overlooked by others with different (and sometimes more restricted) experiences.

Protuberant feminists were white middle-class women who carved out feminist theory based on their personal experiences and problems. While there were numerous black, Latina, Asian, and Native American activists in the movement, many felt marginalized and ignored. The prominent white feminists' paradigm was often at odds with their own[6].

White feminists identified gender as the primary reason for black women's exclusion from full participation in American society; black women were obliged to face the interaction of racism and sexism and find out how to get black males to think about gender problems while white women thought about race. Michele Wallace, Mary Ann Weathers, Bell Hooks, Alice Walker, and Bettina Aptheker were among the black feminists who spoke about these problems. White feminists' demand for unity and cohesiveness was founded on the idea that women formed a gender-based class or caste that was brought together by oppression.

During the inaugural meeting of the 'National Black Feminist Organization,' held in New York City in 1973, black women activists acknowledged that many of the traditional feminist objectives, such as day care, abortion, maternity leave, and violence, were also dangerous to African American women. When it came to explicit concerns, African American and white feminists formed an aggressive working alliance. African-American feminism, which began in 1968 with Fran Beal's founding of the "Third World Women's Alliance" (TWWA), was the most convincing.

The TWWA's central concern was that women of color had to fight several battles against racism, class, and gender dominance at the same time, and that this act was shared by all feminists of color. However, they were no more similar to white women in terms of appearance. The most important declaration of black socialist feminism was written by Boston's Combahee River Collective in 1975, which stated: "We think that sexual politics under patriarchy is as prevalent in Black women's lives as class and racial politics." We also find it difficult to distinguish between racial, class, and sex oppression since we frequently experience them all at the same time in our lives[7].

Combahee was retorting to forms of nationalism that delineated and promoted women's second-class status, subordinate to males, as part of their racial/ethnic identity, and claimed that feminism was a white philosophy, as were many other feminists of color. Various white feminists bowed to these demands as well; for example, a record number of socialist feminists supported the Black Panthers' armed pomposity without question. There is little question that many middle-class white feminists were unaware of the extent and impact of racism on working-class and impoverished women's everyday lives[8].

This unconsciousness was fueled by the same force of self-discovery. Women's liberationists were eager to reach women of color and created numerous initiatives centered on anti-racism and the concerns of working-class women, thus some accused white feminists of ignoring women of color, which was an overblown accusation. (Many of these charges were made by middle-class white feminists who were embarrassed by their advantages.) But, at times, middle-class whites' understandings and urgencies were so privileged, and their conversations so narrow, that their gatherings seemed discriminatory to many women of color[9].

Despite the fact that black women are not only more fraught than whites, but also more supportive of the women's movement's objectives, the women's movement is often characterized as "white middleclass." Black women, particularly those associated with the civil rights struggle, are concerned that feminism would splinter their numbers and divert public focus away from them. In other respects, black women's issues differ from those of white women, most notably in terms of their economic situation, which is much worse than that of either white women or black males.

Furthermore, blacks are hesitant to join groups that they believe to be controlled by whites. Both the black and women's rights movements, it is claimed, need each other's support, and black women cannot attain equality until both campaigns succeed. While the Second Wave was critical in expanding the feminist movement's reach, it was not without faults and setbacks. Intersectional Feminism arose from concerns of racial discrimination during the Second Wave. Merriam-Webster defines intersectionality as the complicated, cumulative way that the consequences of many kinds of discrimination mix, overlap, or intersect[10].

3. CONCLUSION

The White Feminist Movement's tranquil antiquity mirrors the white-centric nationalism that defines American identity. People of color's perspectives are often overlooked in historical accounts, and non-white contributions are absorbed into white culture without acknowledgment of their origins.

Similarly, white Feminism's exclusionary waves reflect a wider disdain for the non-white experience in the United States. Outlining the rise of multiracial feminism raises many issues regarding shared standards established in normative Second Wave histories. By juxtaposing a multiracial feminist movement timeline with a normative timeline, conflicting views of what constitutes freedom emerge, as well as schisms in feminist awareness that still exist now.

Militant women of color and white women stood up to white supremacy and imperialism; some of these women avoided or rejected the term "feminist" because of its association with hegemonic feminism; these women still faced sexism within solidarity and nationalist organizations, as well as within their own communities. Assata Shakur, a leader of the Black liberation movement in the late 1960s, says in her autobiography, To me, the revolutionary fight of Black people had to be against racism, classism, imperialism, and sexism for genuine freedom under a socialist government.

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