



PHILOSOPHIES UNDER MARXISM AND FEMINISM LITERARY THEORIES

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Abstract

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels developed a corpus of ideas known as Marxism or socialism. The postulates of the Marxist school of thought offer the theoretical framework for the working class's struggles to realize socialism as a superior form of human society. The abolitionist movement of the late 1830s can be linked to the history of feminist ideology. Elizabeth Cady and Lucretia Mott spearheaded the Seneca Falls human rights convention, which served as the. Most recent breakthroughs in feminist thought and practice continue to be disregarded by both Marxist theory and practice. The production of people under patriarchal relations is examined, and feminist theory focuses on the conflicts that arise between women and men as a result of their different relationships to these two types of production. This definition of production, which is frequently used in much Marxist literature, is challenged by feminist theory. Because women in their households typically deal with patriarchy as individuals, feminist practice places a strong emphasis on developing consensus tactics, supporting women in their particular challenges, and assisting each woman in feeling both her oppression and her strength. The left largely misunderstands the importance of this tactic. While feminist activism is just as revolutionary as class struggle, its goal is different: it seeks to overthrow patriarchy. A large portion of the left's hostility toward feminism appears to be the result of misinterpreting Mao's idea of "principal contradiction" to demand a class-first approach. The "primary contradiction" in the modern United States includes conflicts including class, gender, race, ethnicity, and age. Additionally, a fight that primarily targets gender dominance might also succeed in overturning. This paper aims to give a highlight under philosophies of Marxism and feminism literary theory.

Keywords: Feminism, Marxism, Gender, Class, Theory and Literature

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INTRODUCTION

Literary criticism is one basic concept of Literature. Criticism can be described as a "discourse about literature," in a general way. The study, discussion, evaluation, and interpretation of literature is the discourse that is called literary criticism. This act of study, discussion, evaluation, and interpretation of literature is often guided by literary theory. Literary theory is the philosophical discussion of the methods and aims of literary criticism and each literary theory gives its special

way of looking at a piece of literature. The two - literary criticism and literary theory - perform interrelated tasks. Any school of literary theory concerns itself with literary texts and thus with the act of criticism. Literary theory as the two words suggest conjoins literature with the theory or philosophy about literature. Such a theory-based interpretation of literature is the activity of literary criticism. So it is not possible to separate the concerns of literary theory from literary criticism.

In the advent of literary criticism different literary theories were emerged. Each school of thought and each theory has its specific understanding of the function of the literary text and all the questions related to the relationship of the text to the author, the reader, and the literary tradition in which it emerges. Thus, the main aim of this paper is to explain the underlying philosophy of Marxist, and Feminist literary criticism.

Marxist criticism places a literary work within the context of class and assumptions about class. A premise of Marxist criticism is that literature can be viewed as ideological, and that it can be analyzed in terms of a Base/Superstructure model. The function of Marxist literary criticism is to expose how works of literature represent dominant ideologies. Some Marxist critics, like Louis Althusser, believe that literature helps readers see the contradictions and fault lines in ideology. Others, like Terry Eagleton, hold that literature furthers ideology by making it seem attractive and "natural." The basic idea: to see the text as how in relation to the economic condition of the time.

In line with this, Eagleton, (1976) and Poblacion (2015) explained that Marxist Criticism is the belief that literature reflects this class struggle and materialism. It looks at how literature functions in relation to other aspects of the superstructure, particularly other articulations of ideology. Like feminist critics, it investigates how literature can work as a force for social change, or as a reaffirmation of existing conditions. Like New Historicism, it examines how history influences literature; the difference is that Marxism focuses on the lower classes.

Eagleton rightly defines Marxist criticism as part of a larger body of theoretical analysis which aims to understand ideologies (the ideas, values, and

feelings) by which men experience their societies at various times. And certain of those ideas, values, and feelings are available to us only in literature. He finally summarizes its value maintaining that —to understand ideologies is to understand both the past and the present more deeply, and such understanding contributes to our liberation. Terry Eagleton (1976) states, "Marxist criticism analyses literature in terms of the historical conditions which produce it." It is, however, not merely 'sociology of literature. The business of Marxist literary criticism is 'to understand ideologies - the ideas, values, and feelings by which men experience their societies at various times' and 'to explain the literary work more fully; and this means a sensitive attention to its forms, styles, and meanings'.

Moreover, Elgaleton (1976) also stated the fundamental premises of Marxism Marxist literary criticism are :

....the economic systems structure human societies; economics is the base on which the superstructure of social/political/ ideological realities is built; all human events and productions have specific material/historical causes; theoretical ideas can be judged to have value only in terms of their concrete applications; examine literature in its cultural, economic, and political context; concerned with the social context of literary works, pursuing; assume that all art is political; Economic and social condition affect all aspects of life including art and literature; Art reflects the social and economic conditions (and class conflict); Art aims at improving the social and economic conditions; As literature represent ideology Marxist critics see it as a way to understand social structures; and Marxist critics explain class structure and relation in a literary work. Thus, the basic tenets of Marxism are no easier to summarize than the essential doctrines of Christianity, but two well-known statements by Marx provide a sufficient point of departure.

It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness. The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it. Both statements were intentionally provocative. By contradicting widely accepted doctrines, Marx was trying to put people's thoughts into reverse gear. First, philosophy has been merely airy contemplation; it is time that it engaged with the

real world. Secondly, Hegel and his followers in German philosophy have persuaded us that the world is governed by thought, that the process of history is the gradual dialectical unfolding of the laws of Reason, and that material existence is the expression of immaterial spiritual essence. People have been led to believe that their ideas, cultural life, legal systems, and religions were the creations of human and divine reason, which should be regarded as the unquestioned guides to human life (Eagleton. 1976). Moreover, Karl Marx and his fellow thinker Friedrich Engels worked together to formulate Marxist Criticism based on the following claims:

The history of mankind, its social groups and interrelations, its social interests, and ways of thinking are extensively determined by the changing mode of its material production.

The historical changes in the fundamental mode of material production cause changes in the class structure of society, ultimately giving rise to two classes in each period and condition namely dominant class and subordinate class. Both the classes engage in the social, economic, and political struggle of the contemporary age.

An ideology of the age helps to form the 'human consciousness that t particular period. An ideology is nothing but beliefs, values, ways of thinking, feelings, perceptions, senses, etc. belonging to that particular period. Marx inherited the term 'ideology' from the French philosophers of the late eighteenth century who used it to designate the study of the assumption that all general concepts develop from sense perceptions.

Like Freudian theory, Marxist theory's influence on Modern art and literature can be first broken down by its influence on writers, the works they produced, on readers, and the way critics use Marxist theory to interpret the works. In this part of my paper, I tried to include the idea of LeRoy and Beitz (1974) as follow:

History as Historical Materialism: The author hopes to show how all human relations are at root a class struggle between oppressors and oppressed, and/or a struggle for control of the means of production. These include "human relations"

writ both large and small: both on a global and political level (like war, the fall of Rome, the spread of Christianity, etc) or on a personal level (how two characters or a family relates to one another). Examples: Heart Of Darkness, Things Fall Apart, A Doll's House.

Writing as a Means of Controlling Ideology: Marxist theory suggests that if hegemony is maintained through ideology, the oppressed must gain control of their ideology. This is explicitly the argument presented by Virginia Woolf in *A Room Of One's Own*; women will break the cycle of oppression by writing their own stories and defining themselves as human, intelligent, equal, etc. This theory also inspired writers of color both in the US and throughout the world, to tell their own stories and redefine the cultural image of the Black man, the Latino, the African, etc.

The Work as Ideology: Simply put, Marxism argues that any work of art functions either consciously or unconsciously as ideology; it does not define some eternal representation of "Truth" so much as it represents the ideologies that serve to oppress or an attempt to rebel against that oppression. When combined with a dose of Nietzsche, this way of thinking about art will have a profound effect on so-called "Post Modern" critical theories.

As a Record of Historical Relations: A Marxist influenced reading of, say a Jane Austen novel would be interested in the role of women as the oppressed and the negotiation of romantic relations and marriage as deeply, if not entirely, influenced by a struggle for domination or freedom. A Feminist Marxist reading of Austen would see the novel's women as the oppressed. However, another approach might note that there are essentially no representations of the working class in these or any other 18th century novels, so that, just as Woolf points out that histories omitted women from history, Austen omitted maids, servants, and peasants.

Generally speaking, The Marxist sees Modernist art, then, as historically conditioned, and historically conditioned in a specific way. Modernism, in a word, has a profound connection with the transition to the epoch of imperialism. Once we have said this, problems of communication begin, for the non-Marxist is almost certain to view this connection between a social system and a shift in artistic

sensibility as tenuous. We can concede that the strength of a good deal of Marxism so far has been in its analysis of content rather than of form. When it comes to form, the observations in criticism of this have sometimes been traditional or derivative. Nevertheless, if to respond to his philosophic imperative, the Marxist student literature must be concerned with both form and content. And this has implications for the approach to Modernism. The Marxist must be concerned with the enormously important formal innovations Modernism, perhaps mainly with two questions in mind: (a) what is their value and significance as part of the entire history of art? And do they offer something that may someday become part of equipment for socialist reality?.

For Marxist critics, politics and economics cannot be separated from art. Marxists hold that any theory which treats literature in isolation as pure aesthetics or the product of a writer's ingenuity, divorcing it from society and history will be seriously deficient in its ability to explain what literature is. For Marxist critics, the social background is important in the consideration of any particular work.

Furthermore, Marxists see history as a series of struggles between antagonistic social classes and the type of economic production they engage in. The structure of history and the structure of society are referred to as dialectical- the dynamic and opposing forces at work within them. Dialectic refers to a method by which history and society can be analyzed to reveal the true relationship between their parts. Marxism has very many different approaches. A critic might for instance, start by looking at the structure of history and society to see how literature reflects or distorts this structure. He could also start from a general concept of literature and then move to writers and texts and out to society. He could also start from a specific text and move to the author, the author's class, and the role of this class in society.

In Marxist thinking, the socio-economic element in any society is the ultimate determinant of that society's character. The basic economic structure engenders several social institutions and beliefs which act to regulate or dissipate the conflict and keep the mode of production in order. Literature is one of the things situated in the base or superstructure of society. This means that literature is a social

element that can be used either to keep the capitalist mode of economy and lifestyle in place or to expose and attack it. Marxism has also given rise to the doctrine of socialist realism which sees literature as social criticism and analysis. The artist is a social activist. The writer, according to Marxist critics, translates social facts into literary facts, and the critic must decode the facts and uncover their reality. The writer must provide a truthful, historico-concrete portrayal of reality. This makes the notion of reflection of reality is a deep-seated tendency in Marxist criticism. It is a way of combating formalist theory which locks the literary work within its sealed world, divorced from history and social reality.

METHOD

This article uses Marxist writer, a socially or ideologically committed writer. In Marxist criticism, there is no room for 'arts for art's sake. The writer must be interested in his own time and be socially responsible. Aesthetic devices such as form, style, language, and theme are all products of history

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The term 'feminism' first emerged in the English language in the 1890s, a significant historical moment when there was an urgent need to name the activities of the women's movement, which was vibrant and popular as never before. Late nineteenth-century feminism joined together women from different classes and social backgrounds. Although the initial enthusiasm was to be dampened and many found their interests ignored by the politics adopted by the leading figures, it achieved the status of a social movement (Knellwolf, 2001). Moreover, with roots in the 1800s, and coming into its own in the 1970s-90s, Feminist Criticism (along with several other important types of criticism and theory) specifically takes issue with New Critical assumptions. Feminist critics hold that, rather than view the literary work as something which contains the world or is a world unto itself, we should view the work as contained by the world. In other words, many felt the New Critics had gone too far in separating literature from its contexts, its physical

circumstances, the real-world material conditions under which it is made, read, and studied

While more recent feminist criticism warns against understanding 'women' as a homogenous category and emphasizes the mistake of eradicating the unique characteristics of different groupings, in the late nineteenth century the emergence of solidarity across national and class barriers were perceived as so novel that the common factor of being a woman was perceived as outweighing the differences. Among other things, the working conditions of female laborers were so appalling that the primary objective was to strive for some improvement: for instance, pregnant women were not infrequently forced to work right up to the delivery of the baby and indeed sometimes gave birth in the factory itself. Like any politically oriented movement, the women's movements which formed in different national settings had to deal with the grossest social injustices of their daily experience; only then could it begin to think about equal rights among its members (Knellwolf, 2001).

Moreover, Knellwolf added that a theoretical engagement with the claims and rights of women concentrated on representation, both in the sense of protesting against political disenfranchisement and challenging the insidious power of literature to propagate views about women's inferiority.

Feminist theory, or feminism, is the support of equality for women and men. Although all feminists strive for gender equality, there are various ways to approach this theory, including liberal feminism, socialist feminism, and radical feminism. Feminist criticism is also concerned with less obvious forms of marginalization such as the exclusion of women writers from the traditional literary canon: "...unless the critical or historical point of view is feminist, there is a tendency to underrepresent the contribution of women writers" (Tyson, 2006). Moreover, Feminist criticism is concerned with "how literature reinforces or undermines the economic, political, social, and psychological oppression of women" (Tyson, 2006).

Feminist criticism is concerned with "how literature (and other cultural productions) reinforce or undermine the economic, political, social, and

psychological oppression of women" (Tyson, 2006). This school of theory looks at how aspects of our culture are inherently patriarchal (male-dominated) and aims to expose misogyny in writing about women, which can take explicit and implicit forms. He also added that feminist criticism concerned with less obvious forms of marginalization such as the exclusion of women writers from the traditional literary canon: "...unless the critical or historical point of view is feminist, there is a tendency to underrepresent the contribution of women writers" (Tyson, 2006).

The core concepts in feminist theory are sex, gender, race, discrimination, equality, difference, and choice. There are systems and structures in place that work against individuals based on these qualities and against equality and equity. Feminist literary criticism is an appropriate approach used to reveal many subordination and oppression of women. In this context, feminist theory is expected to reveal the veil that covers the certain message inside the literary works and reclaim the opinions in literature externally (Ruthven, 1984:24-58). On the other hand, literature, as one of the discipline covers the new theories including feminist literary criticism that features:

- a. The study covers men's perception about women, and how they describe women,
- b. Study about women, the creativity of women in relation with their potentiality,
- c. Study of application of the theory in women's studies.
- d. Moreover, feminist literary criticism is an effort of women scholars to change the tyranny of androcentrist criticism which very male oriented. It tends to influence the women readers to identify themselves with men's character.
- e. However, it is rather difficult to define feminism. However, after sorting all the various perspectives about feminism offered by feminist theorists, it can be discovered that there is a core of characteristics that make it exists,
- f. "Feminism is a perspective that views gender as one of the most important bases of the structure and organization of the social world. Feminists argue that in most known societies this structure has granted women lower status

and value, more limited access to valuable resources, and less autonomy and opportunity to make choices over their lives than it has granted men(Sapiro,1986:441).

Feminists believe that inequities should be eliminated. As an application, feminists cannot simply doing things better as an individuals in the social world, but must work together to change the structure of society. Any action means making the best of an unjust situation. In general, different scholars understood feminist literary theory as women's movement in 1960s to struggle for the equality of rights as social class. In literature: feminism is related to the ways in understanding literary works, in both production and reception. Literary criticism informed by feminist theory (politics of women), uses feminist principles and ideology to critique the language of literature, and this school of thought seeks to analyze and describe the way in which literature portrays the narratives of male domination by exploring the economic, social political and psychological forces embedded with literature.

Though several different approaches exist in feminist criticism, there exist some areas of commonality. This list is excerpted from Tyson (2006):

- a. Women are oppressed by patriarchy economically, politically, socially, and psychologically; patriarchal ideology is the primary means by which women are oppressed.
- b. In every domain where patriarchy reigns, a woman is other: she is marginalized, defined only by her difference from male norms and values.
- c. All of Western (Anglo-European) civilization is deeply rooted in patriarchal ideology, for example, in the Biblical portrayal of Eve as the origin of sin and death in the world.
- d. While biology determines our sex (male or female), culture determines our gender (scales of masculine and feminine).
- e. All feminist activity, including feminist theory and literary criticism, has as its ultimate goal to change the world by promoting gender equality.
- f. Gender issues play a part in every aspect of human production and experience, including the production and experience of literature, whether we are consciously aware of these issues or not.

Different scholars like Tyson (2006), Reno (2021), Mambrol (2017), Showalter (1977) and others stated that feminist criticism has, in many ways, followed what some theorists call the three waves of feminism. It is movement of Women's Suffrage and The Seneca Falls Convention- late 1700s-early 1900's: writers like Mary Wollstonecraft (*A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, 1792) highlight the inequalities between the sexes. It is also called the 'Feminine' Phase - in the feminine phase, female writers tried to adhere to male values, writing as men, and usually did not enter into debate regarding women's place in society. Female writers often employed male pseudonyms during this period. Activists like Susan Anthony and Victoria Woodhull contribute to the women's suffrage movement, which leads to National Universal Suffrage in 1920 with the passing of the Nineteenth Amendment (History.com, 2021). Moreover, First-wave feminism had a fairly simple goal: have society recognize that women are humans, not property. While the leaders of 1st-wave feminism were abolitionists, their focus was on white women's rights. This exclusion would haunt feminism for years to come.

As Golban and Ciobanu, (2008), Napilkoski, (2020) Wulan and Hairni (2021) it refers to a period – 19th and early 20th C in the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States. It is also Active until the First World War; 'a prolonged phase of imitation of the prevailing modes of the dominant tradition, and internalization of its standards of art and its views on social roles' The key concerns- education, employment, the marriage laws, and the plight of intelligent middle-class single women. The overall goal is to improve the legal position for women in particular to gain women the vote. In this phase Men and women have separate, biologically determined roles and duties in society and Women work in the private sphere (the home), men in the public sphere.

Women's Liberation (Gynocriticism): early 1960s-late 1970s: building on more equal working conditions necessary in America during World War II, movements such as the National Organization for Women (NOW), formed in 1966, cohere feminist political activism. Writers like Simone de Beauvoir (1949) and Elaine Showalter established the groundwork for the dissemination of feminist theories dove-tailed with the American Civil Rights movement (history .com,2021).

It built on first-wave feminism and challenged what women's role in society should be. It is also called the 'Feminist' Phase - in the feminist phase, the central theme of works by female writers was the criticism of the role of women in society and the oppression of women.

According to Golban and Ciobanu, (2008) it is liberation movement and 'a phase of protest against these standards and values, including a demand for autonomy'; Winning of Vote, Enabled to reject the accommodating postures of femininity; Used Literature to dramatize the ordeals of wronged womanhood; it dealt with inequality of laws and pioneered by Betty Friedan. Moreover, in this wave women achieved championed: abortion rights, reproductive freedom, and other women's health issues.

Moreover, as Mambrol (2017) justified that Second-wave feminism is a term used to describe a new period of feminist collective political activism and militancy which emerged in the late 1960s. The concept of 'waves' of feminism was itself only applied in the late 1960s and early 1970s and therefore its application to a previous era of female activism tells us a great deal about the dawning second wave.

In addition to this, Elaine Showalter pioneered gynocriticism with her book "A Literature of Their Own (1977)" Gynocriticism involves three major aspects. The first is the examination of female writers and their place in literary history. The second is the consideration of the treatment of female characters in books by both male and female writers. The third and most important aspect of gynocriticism is the discovery and exploration of a canon of literature written by women; gynocriticism seeks to appropriate a female literary tradition.

Most Feminists would balk at the idea of generalizing Feminist theory into three basic types because part of Feminism is to resist the tendency towards categorizing things. Nonetheless, in A-Level sociology, it's usual to distinguish between three basic types of Feminism – Liberal, Radical and Marxist, each of which has its general explanation for sex and gender inequality, and a matched solution.

This is the variety of feminism that works within the structure of mainstream society to integrate women into that structure. Its roots stretch back to the social contract theory of government instituted by the American Revolution. Abigail Adams and Mary Wollstonecraft were there from the start, proposing equality for women. As is often the case with liberals, they slog along inside the system, getting little done amongst the compromises until some radical movement shows up and pulls those compromises left of center. This is how it operated in the days of the suffragist movement and again with the emergence of radical feminists (Thompson, 2016).

Moreover, he also added that Liberal Feminists believe that the main causes of gender inequality are ignorance and socialization does not believe that social institutions are inherently patriarchal. They believe in a “March of Progress” view of gender relations. This means that they believe that men and women are gradually becoming more equal over time and that this trend will continue.

As evidence, liberal feminists point to various legal reforms which promote sexual equality such as the sex discrimination act (1970), the fact that girls now outperform boys in education, the fact that there are now equal amounts of men and women in paid work. Liberal Feminists are especially keen to emphasize the beneficial effects which women going into paid work has had on gender equality – as a result, women are now much more independent than in the past, and women are now the main income earners in 25% of households.

Liberal Feminist ideas have probably had the most impact on women’s lives. One criticism of the liberal feminist view is that it is ethnocentric – it only really reflects the experiences of white, middle-class women.

Marxism recognizes that women are oppressed, and attributes the oppression to the capitalist/private property system. Thus they insist that the only way to end the oppression of women is to overthrow the capitalist system. Socialist feminism is the result of Marxism meeting radical feminism. Marxists and socialists often call themselves "radical," but they use the term to refer to a completely different "root" of society: the economic system (Thompson, 2016).

Marxist Feminists argue the main cause of women's oppression is capitalism. The disadvantaged position of women is seen to be a consequence of the emergence of private property and their lack of ownership of the means of production. From a Marxist Feminist perspective, the traditional nuclear family only came about with capitalism, and the traditional female role of housewife supports capitalism – thus women are double oppressed through the nuclear family and capitalist system. Thompson, (2016) stated that Women's oppression within the nuclear family supports capitalism in at least three ways.

Women reproduce the labor force – through their unpaid domestic labor by socializing the next generation of workers and servicing the current workers (their husbands!). Women absorb anger – Think back to Parson's warm bath theory. The Marxist-Feminist interpretation of this is that women are just absorbing the anger of the proletariat, who are exploited and who should be directing that anger towards the Bourgeois. Women are a 'reserve army of cheap labor' – if women's primary role is domestic, and they are restricted from working, this also means they are in reserve, to be taken on temporarily as necessary by the Bourgeois, making production more flexible.

CONCLUSION

Marxist feminism ignores other sources of inequality such as sexual violence; patriarchal systems existed before capitalism, in tribal societies for example, and The experience of women has not been particularly happy under communism. Liberal feminism- Based upon male assumptions and norms such as individualism and competition, and encourages women to be more like men and therefor deny the 'value of qualities traditionally associated with women such as empathy. Liberalism is accused of emphasizing public life at the expense of private life. Difference Feminists argue it is an ethnocentric perspective – based mostly on the experiences of middle class, educated women. The concept of patriarchy has been criticized for ignoring variations in the experience of oppression; some critics argue that it focuses too much on the negative experiences of women, failing to recognize that some women can have happy marriages for example, and it tends to

portray women as universally good and men as universally bad, it has been accused of man hating, not trusting all men.

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