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She Does Exist

Dr. Naseem Achakzai, Ph.D.

Abstract

It was one of the most repeatedly asked questions from students and from a majority of the young teaching staff at University level - 'what is feminism?' This is still a growing part of literary and social criticism that needs to be explored, more seriously and authentically on an empirical ground. One of my teaching colleagues from Gender Studies Department regularly inquired about Feminism, and after studying and teaching in Gender Studies, he felt confused and it complicated his entire stream of studies and knowledge with which he had to perform as a well equipped University teacher, as demanded by university standards.

Actually, Feminism as a technical tool does not exist in several main technical concerns, but is being patched up, linked, embedded, and is wedded to a scientific theoretical science and poetics that requires the polishing-and-finishing touch of Linguistics. It was a matter of great surprise to go through different books of scientific theories used in Gender Studies Course, to find out that the entire portion of theoretical essays or quotations were totally borrowed, either from Linguistics or Modern Criticism, which neither the teaching staff, nor the students could absorb without its Linguistics and Literary explanations that is one of the biggest as well as dangerous gaps in Asian Educational system. Speaking particularly of the situation in Pakistan, this gap must be filled to wed Arts or Humanities with Science Faculties, particularly with Linguistics. The theoretical book, used in Gender Studies, cannot ever be understood or taught without a Linguistic approach.

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Despite my being extremely busy, I felt responsible for sharing my piece of comprehension as a patching-device to promote a sort of understanding that could fill the above mentioned gap that must be acted upon as an activity of academic level in Asia.

Keywords: **Political voice, equalization, historical movement, cultural figure, cultural ground.**

Introduction

As a consciousness, and a stream of awareness, Feminism at the very beginning of this paper can be called a Political voice¹ that needs to be justified, and to be equalized as a force for its very rights; and dealing with this topic as a technical thread on an academic level, makes demands on one to find and catch its first stream from the mechanism of classic-structuralism which the student and the teaching staff of all social sciences must be introduced to. Secondly, feminism, includes the historical background of 'feminist movements', from social, cultural, political, traditional, and critical points of view, or that can be treated as feminist approaches as seen in literary, social and political studies that also envelop Fine Arts from Movies, Theater, Painting and Sculpture.

Feminism, as a quantitative or qualitative treatment can be used on different theoretical levels and their requirements, either in the form of a 'figure' or a 'fore-ground', because 'feminism' as a 'figure' can also be turned into a 'fore-ground' in its cultural, social activists' movements and development.

For instance, to capture an image, or an effect, how she acts when she gives or takes. How she acts when she *becomes* a character in action and movement from social, sexual locations of mind, to body positions. She is a 'figure' as well as a 'fore-ground' of bodily, mentally, to psychological axis, from political, cultural to social activities, to be accepted as she *is* or as she performs in a *state* and position, as she is *becoming*.

She is not only *becoming*, but 'is made' *in, or of*, what she '*has become*'. One of the best ways of treating the feminist approach on a binary level is to trace out the reasons when and why she is *included* or *excluded*. The paste and cut will define her existing position well from social, political and literary dynamics:

Why did she do it?

Why didn't she do it?

Why did she write it?

Why didn't she write it?

Why did, or why didn't she reveal it?

Why didn't she conceal it? - So on and so forth, and there can be thousands of negative and positive levels that will enhance her theoretical position in all binary levels in the main current of our 21st century. Why *did* or why *didn't* or why *was* or why *wasn't* she, will certainly explore the similarities and dissimilarities in its cognitive, thoughtful

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dimensions to strengthen or equip her, while the term 'equality' claims to encompass her from Aristotle to Derrida.

Challenging Portions

One of the most important portions of feminism, now-a-days has come to be the 'reading' portion: a piece of writing a woman reads, and secondly to read a piece of writing by female writers. Feminism must be activated and explored in:

Reading

Writing, and

Speaking, from *Syntax*, and *Semantics*, to *Pragmatics* technologies, in all kinds of political, social, and literary grounds, not how, nor why not, a woman acts as an actant, but what she has been, to what she is becoming into, from an act of poetry to an *act* of Assembly bill, she is portrayed as 'being an actant in.

Her images of becoming from either 'effects' or 'projectors' can scientifically be captured in her synchronic and syntagmatic sequences in combination with the 'Female Act Theory' as a fore-ground. She can also be captured, or interpreted as a figure on her paradigmatic and vertical axis in her *Selections*. She can be the *Selection* as well as the *Combination* of her social, traditional and behavioural standards, to develop the degrees of *Similarity*, *Proximity*, *Continuity*, and *Closure*, to record what her social, political and behavioural *choices* are as an actant, to achieve her very icon from dance to the mixture of spices within their timings, if that is either stage or a kitchen she acts and behaves 'in'.

Her inward trajectory moves are the descriptions of her 'self' that communicates to the deconstructed mirror of her mounting on realities, even these course-directed moves as *figures* can also be depicted on different bodies from a car, a washing machine to a man's body.

She is not only the demand of life (figure), but demands life (fore-ground) too. She is not only a 'mystery herself (figure), but faces (fore-ground) life as a mystery that must be tamed and timed within the digital frames of Structural lines and requirements like a musical tune. She has not been brought up as a tuned and known figure on Planet Earth yet. Her beauty as a body from her focused choices to moving steps must be redefined via theoretical and methodological strings, to look at her with a properly measured time and distance. She was only exaggerated as a poetical figure, but has not clearly been composed as one of the important axis of *poetics* to shift her as a *radiant figure* from 'form' to 'structure', or from 'body' as 'sign' to 'meanings' to record her 'effects', because the 'idea' of female action exists, or can be found in her 'presenting effects' as 'signifier' on Post-structural or Postmodern system, or as an assessment.

Feminism can also be a 'sign' from 'delusion' to 'play' signifying part of an 'element' through processing signification of a mechanism called Structure as a fore-ground from theology to psychoanalysis, that is evolutionized by science and is certainly

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revolutionized by ideologies in different social and traditional levels, either to include or exclude her play, from her body to her synchronic actions.

- Classical Ages dealt with her as a sign, but without Structural treatment.
- Present scientific² treatment deals with her using structural tools, from pure sciences, exploring her from Myth to Linguistics as well as from imitation to a signified image.

A figure as well as fore-ground

One of the scientific curves called cognitive poetics³ can deal with her as a 'figure': sign/signifier as a fore-ground of mind, body, soul, individuality, demand, and on the other hand as a 'fore-ground' she projects, creates, facilitates life, love, hatred, revenge and possesses or expresses as a container to shed the meanings of fore-and-back-grounds to shed meanings-with-effects of Political, Social, Mythological, Psychoanalytical, Marxist, Socialist, Colonial, Postcolonial structures within and without principles. She finds her deserved space and time in all spheres of life though she was considered as an inferior part and particle of the reality of life. ' . . . The inferior term is always associated with the feminine, while the term that occupies the privileged position is associated with masculinity. As we will see in a moment, this opposition, interpreted from a psychoanalytical perspective, plays a prominent role in, for instance, one form of ecologically inspired criticism.'⁴

But presently she has become more complicated the way Hollywood and Bollywood, or European and Russian films or theaters portray her within the frame of the 'effects' they want to produce to give meanings in our Post-structural-or-modern technologies.

It is a matter of aesthetic to assess 'feminism' more delicately or sophisticatedly with care and 'manner' so far as her mind within her body or her body within her mind is concerned if she is a dancer, or film-or-drama character, or if she is a vessel of dream or production.

As an axis she is approachable being an activist,⁵ a novelist in her political and historical synchronic-frames as a body and mind, generating social and cultural thoughts, if she is dealt as a topic with a synchronizing proper methodology.

Feminism,⁶ as a research topic has always been confused and misled, when a selected theory⁷ had been dealt by an improper and wrong methodology and most of the teaching staff mix and confuse methodologies with theories that turn the topic into a puzzle; so it can easily and implicitly be graphed out that if theory is dealt as a vertical axis, then the specific methodology must be maintained as a horizontal axis, or its sequence can be altered accordingly, to award clarity from readers' point of view.

One of the confusions that mostly occur in many great researchers' undertaken tasks, mostly in 'Feminism' is that they mix Philosophy with History, History with Psychology

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that prevents the function of scientific approach called methodology. If this kind of mixture had been allowed academically then there would have been no difference between New-historicism and Cognitive Poetics in Postmodernism. A single point of an ambiguity or complication can destroy the whole body of an undertaken academic text in Feminism that needs years and years to be healed, redone, recomposed or restored again from the very beginning, which a scholar cannot afford in this short and valuable time and space.

Conclusion

To conclude 'Feminism' succinctly and purely is a scientific track from classic-structuralism to post-modernism from two dimensional treatments to the 'effect of meanings', either to capture its reality or an image from her language to her body in a synchronic frame of work. Or if 'Feminism' is dealt as a Social task on Semantic graph, or explored on a Pragmatic axis, even then its theoretical authenticity and purity must be **protected by a single relevant methodology as a password or an interwoven code. An art** of a scholar is not to broaden, but to narrow the topic.

On an empirical level it is clear worldwide that theory is a scientific treatment to achieve a targeted purpose clearly within the frame of Internationally shared values, from Marxism to Psychoanalytical grounds to work inside or outside feminist questions and solutions, either in the form of a 'figure' or a 'fore-ground' to entertain Feminism in its Structural images and their 'effects'.

Notes and references:

¹ ' . . . For liberal modernity could be said to be founded on a fundamental split between the private and the public which relegates women to the demesne of domesticity and deprives them of a political voice while requiring that men identify with a discourse of rationality which splits off and denies the importance of feeling. Were there not inadequacies and flaws in those political discourses of modernity which had already begun to be exposed by thinkers such as Marx and Freud? Although the discourses of feminism clearly arise out of and are made possible by those of Enlightened modernity and its models of reason, justice and autonomous subjectivity as universal categories, feminism has been one of the most powerful movements in thought to expose some of the contradictions and inadequacies of this political legacy. Simply by raising the issue of sexual difference and its construction, feminism weakens the rootedness of Enlightenment thought in the principle of sameness and universality. Feminism has thoroughly exposed the ways in which this 'universal' principle is contradicted by the construction of public/private split which consigns women to the 'private' realm of feeling, nurturance, intuition, domesticity and the body, in order to clarify a 'public' realm of reason, efficiency and objectivity as masculine. (*Modern Literary Theory: A READER*, Fourth Edition, Edited by Philip Rice and Patricia Waugh. pp.143-44)

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² Dr. Y. K. Singh in the Preface of his *Research Methodology* accepts that ‘Human beings’ desire to know more about their world has led them from primitive superstition to modern scientific knowledge. From mysticism, dogma, and the limitations of unsystematic observation based upon personal experience, they have examined the process of thinking itself to develop the method of deductive-inductive thinking, which has become the foundation of scientific method.’ (*Research Methodology*, p. v)

³ ‘An alternative view would suggest that the process of engaging in cognitive poetic analysis offers a raised awareness of certain patterns that might have been subconscious or not even noticed at all. Cognitive poetics in this view has a productive power in at least suggesting a new interpretation. This perspective is more attractively radical but its challenge is that it seems to suggest that some interpretations are only available to analysts who have a knowledge of cognitive poetics.’ (*Cognitive Poetics: an introduction*, p. 7.)

⁴ (*Literary Theory: The Basic*, POSTSTRUCTURALISM CONTINUED, by Hans Bertens. P.165)

⁵ ‘Modern political discourses have been concerned, in particular, with issues of rights, agency, freedom and equality. As earlier writers such as Mary Wollstencraft and Virginia Woolf had recognized, however, many of the political discourses which developed such concept claimed to be universal but actually excluded women from full citizenship and sovereignty. One of the questions already raised by earlier feminists such as Woolf (in *Three Guineas*, 1938) was whether it was possible to extend to women a system whose very premises involve the naming of femininity as irrational and the exclusion of women from its structures.’ (Modern Literary Theory: A READER, Fourth Edition, Edited by Philip Rice and Patricia Waugh. p.143)

⁶ ‘Perhaps more than any other mode of criticism, feminist theory has cut across and drawn on multiple and contradictory traditions while presenting what is arguably one of the most fundamental challenges to previous critical orthodoxies in its revaluation of subjectivity and the category of ‘experience’. Like Marxism, feminism is rooted in the political discourses of modernity, inheriting but also challenging its ideas of sovereignty, equality, liberty, rights and rationality. Feminism begins as an Enlightenment discourse founded in the Kantian idea of an autonomous and rational self who is free to choose; in the liberal concept of rights and ownership, and in the idea of citizenship and consensus in the social contract tradition of Hobbes, Rousseau and Locke. Feminism, however, has also been instrumental in exposing some of the contradictions of this legacy and has substantially contributed both to its current development and crisis.’ (Modern Literary Theory: A READER, Fourth Edition, Edited by Philip Rice and Patricia Waugh. p.143)

⁷ ‘Gradually what emerged in feminist theory in the 1970s, therefore, was a recognition on the part of feminists of a central contradiction in attempts to define an epistemology and foundation for its politics: that women seek equality and recognition of a gendered identity which has been constructed through the very culture and ideological formations which feminists were seeking to challenge and dismantle. Woolf herself had begun to articulate this perception in the 1920s, recognizing that if being shut out of a masculine public demesne was frustrating and demeaning, being shut into it might not be the solution either. The aim of feminism must be to break down the public/private split and the binaries of masculinity/femininity, mind/body, reason/feeling and

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begin to discover a language of politics which might articulate a radically different vision of gender and society.’ (*Modern Literary Theory: A READER*, Fourth Edition, Edited by Philip Rice and Patricia Waugh. p.144)

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