

The Interplay between Class, Race and Religion on the Representation of Women in some selected novels of Nathaniel Hawthorne, Kate Chopin, Zora Neale Hurston and Alice Walker.

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ABSTRACT

This literary work entitled the interplay between class, race and religion on the representation of Women in some selected novels of Nathaniel Hawthorne, Kate Chopin, Zora Neale Hurston and Alice Walker examines the different forms of oppression which unfavorably expose the American women to suffering, discomfort, disillusionment and anger.

It analyses the socio cultural constrictions of class, race and culture suffered by American women under the male supremacy (sexism) which attempts to put women into subordinate roles in a male-dominated society.

American women, face patriarchy which is revealed by the variety of injustices all women suffered from. Despite their different treatments, American women, black and white alike have developed different strategies to overcome their oppression.

This article analyses the different factors which prevent women from full development as human beings and their battle for equality.

Keywords: Gender, racism, feminism, culture, capitalism.

RESUME

Ce travail littéraire intitulé interconnexion entre les considérations des Classes, raciales et religieuses sur la représentation des femmes en référence avec les œuvres choisies de Nathaniel Hawthorne, Kate Chopin, Zora Neale Hurston et Alice Walker font l'analyse des différentes formes d'oppression du genre féminin et de prise de conscience féminine face aux restrictions sociales qui violent le droit des femmes. Il analyse la domination du mâle sur toutes ses formes à savoir : la considération de classes, de race et de religion.

Il faut souligner aussi l'éveil de conscience féminine et la quête effrénée du personnage féminin pour l'autodétermination par des réactions violentes et de rébellion, ce qui figure une pétition d'émergence vers l'indépendance.

L'article veut montrer que beaucoup d'instruments et stratégies ont été en interconnexion pour l'oppression des femmes.

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En somme, l'article se situe dans le cadre de l'identification des causes sociales de l'oppression de la femme et de leur lutte pour leur droit à l'égalité.

Mots clés: Genre, Racisme, Féminisme, Culture, Capitalisme

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Background to the study:

Introduction

Historically, women came from different origins with the first settlers to people the United States and we cannot forget to mention the native Indians who were there enjoying their own life, culture and civilisation. Consequently, each group of women has its own notion of equality and freedom, that is to say, we have various perspectives of feminism.

In addition, feminism has been exposed to many abolitionist movements and finally covers more diversity of race, class, sexuality, ethnicity and ability than any other U.S. movement. Their broadly shared goal is to end their subordination and loyalties to men and families, to affirm their self-determination and participation at all levels of government. Their goal was also to end the inequality of income for work. In all, feminism articulates political opposition to the subordination of women as women, whether that subordination is ascribed by law, imposed by social conventions or inflected by individual men and women. They have also offered alternatives to existing unequal relation of gender power and these alternatives have formed their agendas. Even though women have acted collectively to contest their subordination throughout U.S. history, important divisions, contradictions and differences remain among them.

In any patriarchal society, women are defined negatively in many aspects of the life as an inferior sex and oppressed by men. Kate Millett (1970) says that women are relegated to an inferior position because of their frailty by a male defined society and because society is patriarchally ruled. She further argues that:

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Sexual dominion obtains nevertheless as perhaps the most fundamental concept of power. This is because our society, like all other historical civilizations, is a patriarchy. The fact is evident if one recalls that the military, industry, technology, universities, science, political office and finance - in short every avenue of power within the society, including the Coercive force of the police is entirely in male hands (Kate Millett, 1970 : 24-25).

Women, black and white alike, are victimised or oppressed by men. They are refused certain acceptances or certain rights to certain activities. Many politicians, writers, ideologies, traditions and laws, define them negatively. According to an anti-feminist French politician, Napoleon Bonaparte, a woman is one of her husband's properties. One can read his assertion quoted by Robert Morgan (1970 : 32),

Nature intended women to be our slaves...They are our property, we are not theirs. They belong to us just as a tree that bears fruit belongs to a gardener. What a mad idea to demand equality for women...women are nothing but machines for producing children.

In keeping with Napoleon Bonaparte; Arthur Schopenhauer, a German philosopher who also has a negative idea about women, underestimates a woman's capacity and faculty when he says, "Women have great talent, but no genius, for they always remain subjective" (Robert Morgan 1970 : 32). As for women's education, J.J Rousseau, the French writer, maintains that:

The whole education of women ought to be relative to men. To please them. To be useful to them, to make themselves loved and honoured by them. To educate them when young, to care for them and to make life sweet and agreeable to them. These are duties of women at all times and what should be taught them from their infancy (Robert Morgan 1970 : 32).

In many societies, women are considered as slaves or beasts of burden. This idea is strongly supported by a great philosopher, Aristote, in his work Politics when he says:

We may thus conclude that it is a general law that there should be naturally ruling elements and elements naturally ruled.... The rule of the freeman over the slave is one kind of rule; that of the male over the female another.... The slave is entirely without the faculty of deliberation. The female indeed possesses it but in a form which remains inconclusive.

All these quotations and explanations go to prove that women have been for long an out-group, naturally defined as sex objects, unable to perform any work. Woman is a the sex that can give birth to young or produce eggs, further considered as a piece of equipment that has a hole or space into which another part can be introduced or fitted. According to Barbara Smith, the subordination of women is ascribed by law, imposed by social conventions or inflicted by individual men and women The tools which sustain this oppression are battle of class, concept

of race and religious considerations. These three ingredients of oppression of women are going to be the framework of this article.

The nature of women's oppression pushes us to put the following question for better analysis. How do we formulate demands that will reflect both women's needs as workers and women's needs as mothers? How do we campaign on one front without thereby subordinating the tasks on the other? How do we resolve the tensions women have experienced between insisting on their equality with men and insisting on their difference?

Feminism has long been described and dismissed as a middle-class affair, a movement that talks in the name of all women, but pursues the narrower concerns of those more privileged ones.

Through the use of Feminist, New Historist and psychological approaches, this article criticizes the various causes interconnected for the oppression of the female characters.

1. Class Clash

As far as the women's movement is concerned, the preponderance of middle-class women among its supporters has been widely accepted even by those sympathetic to its aims and it is 'bourgeois' women who are usually credited with the first stirring of discontent. In fact, feminism generally springs from each woman's own lived experience. Such experience varies enormously as some women's burdens are other women's privileges.

As we survey Nathaniel Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter, Kate Chopin's The Awakening, Zora Neale Hurston's Their Eyes Were Watching God and Alice Walker's The Color Purple, we realise that the theme of feminism or aspects of feminism are uppermost in them, although they are written within two centuries and by both sexes. Nevertheless, all the characters are developing their own strategies, which show their strategies or class.

In The Awakening by Kate Chopin, the main character of the story is Edna Pontellier who is not a Creole. Other important characters are Adele Ratignolle, Mr. Ratignolle, Robert Lebrun, and Leonce Pontellier who are all Creoles. In Creole society the men are dominant. Seldom do the Creoles accept outsiders to their social circle, and women are expected to provide well-kept homes and have many children. Edna and Adele are friends who are very different because of the way they were brought up and the way they treat their husbands. Adele is a loyal wife who always obeys her husband's commands. Edna is a woman who strays from her husband and

does not obey her husband's commands. Kate Chopin uses Adele to emphasize the differences between her and Edna.

Edna Pontellier is not a Creole, so her relationship with her husband is difficult. In her husband's eyes, she has failed in her duties as a wife and as a mother to her own children. What Edna's husband expects from her is never what she does. Leonce comes home in the middle of the night and talks to Edna while she is sleeping. Then he tells her that Raoul, one of their sons, is sick and tells her to get up and check on him. Edna had never really had the desire to have children but she did anyway. She was not a "mother-woman" because she would rather be alone sometimes; she did not feel she had to be with her children twenty-four hours a day. If one of Edna's boys "...took a tumble whilst at play, he would not rush crying to his mother's arms for comfort; he would more likely pick himself up" (16). Edna never felt that she fit in with Creole society because she "...most forcibly was their entire absence of prudery" (19). The Creoles would talk about things such as childbirth and would flirt with others and not mean anything. Yet Edna would never dream of talking about her childbirths with anyone or flirting unless she meant it. Creole women devoted their whole lives to their husbands where Edna was carefree and did as she pleased. She was carefree because she would go out onto the beach with only a sundress and a little hat on when she was supposed to be all covered up so she would not become sun burnt. Leonce was not pleased to see a sun burn on her body because he does not want his possession like a lower class. Adele who is very different from Edna acted differently towards her children and her husband.

Adele was a Creole woman who was devoted to her husband. Adele and her husband "...understood each other perfectly." If ever the fusion of two human beings into one has been accomplished it was surely in their union"(93). Adele was a class of a «mother-woman" because she wanted children every two years. She had already had three children and the fourth was on its way. All Adele would think about all day long would be her children. If any of her children were to have hurt themselves, they would come crying to her and she would make them all better. Adele would always be sewing clothes for her children and talking about them. Sometimes she would wonder if she should leave the children behind and go somewhere with Edna. Adele was Creole so she fit in with the society and was not a prude. She would talk about things such as her childbirths and was not afraid to read certain books that Edna would read without anyone knowing. Adele was not carefree because she always worried about her children and if her husband asked her to do something, she would do it right away. When she went to

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the beach, she had "twined a gauze veil about her head and wore doeskin gloves, with gauntlets that protected her wrist" (27). Her skin is pale and shows that she mostly stays at home with the children and obeys what her husband has asked of her.

White women's groups have an imperialist and racist ideology. White women's movement is middle class. Very few of these women suffer the extreme economic exploitation that most black women are subjected to day by day. Celie at the beginning of the novel was poor; it was because of her self-assertiveness that she becomes rich.

Both Hester and Edna respectively in The Scarlet Letter and The Awakening, are both white women but their ways of asking for freedom are not the same and this is according to their own experiences. Same as Janie and Celie in Their Eyes Were Watching God and in The Color Purple are both black women of the American twentieth century. However, while Janie can be considered as a radical feminist, Celie is portrayed dramatically as a "romantic lesbian" because she has never fought against her female power in the lesbian condition. Lesbian existence resists male dominance and serves as a way to female freedom.

Keeping with these few examples mentioned above we can assert that within the history of feminism in the United States, there are many varieties of feminism. Feminism may mean something different to different groups, because it springs from each woman's own lived experience. One of the well-known American theorists, Elaine Showalter says that the "*Personal is political*" (Davidson, 308). The evolution and partition of feminism into feminisms may have different interpretations. Although the various feminisms were each ideologically and strategically distinctive, much overlap existed in memberships, participation and coalition building. .

Class matters are framed too much in the language of privilege and lead to a hierarchy of oppression. The notion of privilege has tended to dominate debate, the privileges of heterosexual women who derive their comfort and support from the men who subordinate and control them. The privileges of middle-class women, whose money and education cushion their exposure to the female condition. It relates also to the privileges of white women who can shelter behind the advantages of race. The result is too often a hierarchy of the oppressed (in which white middle-class heterosexual women hardly score victims at all) and in our catalogue of those who have suffered the most we lose sight of more crucial concerns. Women were expected to remain subservient to their fathers and husbands. Their occupational choices were

also extremely limited. Middle- and upper-class women generally remained home, caring for their children and running the household. Lower-class women often did work outside the home, but usually as poorly-paid domestic servants or laborers in factories and mills.

2. Racism and Capitalism

The oppression of Black women has its historical roots in the foundation and development of capitalism and imperialism in the United States. This special oppression is based on three things.

Most Black women are workers and are subjected to *economic (class) exploitation* at the hands of the rich. Black women have always worked and this more than anything else has shaped the experience of black women in the United States. In fact, the work experiences of black women make their concerns somewhat different from those of the women's liberation movement which seeks to get white women into the work place. Both black and white women, however, share the demand of equal pay for equal work.

Black women, as do the masses of black men, suffer from many forms of racist national oppression, like job discrimination and the denial of basic democratic rights.

Black women, like all women, face patriarchy which is revealed by the variety of injustices women suffered from. They represented in a way, the oppressed class that had always been subject to men's domination through male self interest and had been prevented from full development as human beings.

They suffered also of male supremacy (sexism) which attempts to put women into subordinate roles in a male-dominated society Sexism under patriarchy, was the norm that ruled gender relationships for men in control of everything. This is reflected in the role of women in the black family. In short, the oppression of black women grows out of the same system of capitalism that exploits and oppresses the masses of black people and everybody else, and it is buttressed by patriarchal ideology. The particular content of this oppression has been transformed as the experiences of black people have changed from slavery to the rural experience to the urban experience. These three periods provide the historical framework for our analysis of black women and the family.

From Reconstruction to the present, black women household workers have considered sexual abuse perpetrated by the "man of the house" as one of their major occupational hazards. Time

after time they have been victims of extortion on the job, compelled to choose between sexual submission and absolute poverty for themselves and their families.

Zora Neale Hurston (1937) mentions Nanny she says, "(nanny): de nigger woman is de mule uh de world so fur Ah can see" (29). That is to say, black women are considered arbitrarily as a mule, beast and dull.

Conscious of their position as sexual objects for white men, Nanny convinces Janie to marry Logan Killicks, appreciating that "He's a good man, too" (185). Janie's attempt to reject Killicks earns her a slap from Nanny; "you answer me when I speak. Don't you derepoutin' wid me after all Ah done went through for you! She slapped the girl's face violently, and forced her head back so that their eyes met in struggle" (186).

The slap prepares Janie's psychology positively towards the acceptance of Logan Killicks a white man. Nanny's persistent persuasion reveals a number of ideas behind Janie's marriage and her female status in American society. She adds:

Honey, de white man is de ruler of everything as fur as Ah been able tuh find out. Maybe it's some place way off in de ocean where de black man is in power, but we don't know nothin' but what we see so de Whiteman throw down de load and tell de nigger man tuh pick it up because he have to, but don't tote it. He hand it to his womenfolk. De nigger woman is de mule uh de would so fur as Ah can see. Ah been praying fur it tuh be different with you. Lawd, lawl, lawd! (Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, p. 186).

Many of the ideas concerning sex relations and mating were carried over from slavery. Consequently, the family lacked an institutional character, since legal marriage and family traditions did not exist among a large section of the population. The family groups originated in the mating of young people who regarded sex relations outside of marriage as normal behavior. When pregnancy resulted, the child was taken into the mother's family group. Analyzing the condition of black American women throughout the history of the United States, we can say at this level that their oppression is triple.

The triple oppression of black women can be explained by a Class (economic) exploitation, racism, and sexist oppression which have combined to put black women at the bottom rung on most measures of social equality: below white males, black males and white females. Black women asserted their goals of universal justice, which required racial uplift in partnership with black men and uniquely for women, of defence against attacks on their morality, a legacy of many women's sexual vulnerability under slavery.

Through the analysis of Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* and Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*, the female protagonists are victims of racial and economic oppression as they attempt to live a meaningful and dignified life amid the degrading circumstances of a share cropping life. These female characters do not lie down and play dead in the face of such immense oppression. Rather, they manage to transcend their desperate and painful circumstances in order to affirm life.

African Americans remain second-class citizens, facing substantially higher unemployment, lower wages, worse housing, higher poverty rates and far higher levels of victimization at the hands of the police and judicial system than whites.

This imposes a double burden on women, who most often also work outside the home, as well as do the bulk of the child care and housework. A whole ideological apparatus exists that enshrines the privatized family as the most acceptable form of childrearing and personal relations.

Capitalism has turned sex into a commodity, a reality whose burden falls chiefly, but not exclusively, on women. Women are denied control of their own sexuality and reproductive decisions denigrated if they are sexually promiscuous (unlike men, who are congratulated) and denied, to varying degrees, control over whether to carry a pregnancy to term. Women also face sexual harassment and violence in the home as well as outside it.

The system of capitalism and racism has attempted, by many devious ways or means, to destroy the humanity of black people. This has meant an outrageous assault on every black man, woman and child who resides in the United States. Hurston refers to the situation of blacks during and after slavery through Nanny, who is Janie's grandmother. Nanny rootlessness, because of her slave experience, seeks to ground Janie in such a way that she will never feel the lack of foundation which Nanny's history has laid upon her. Her plan for Janie to enjoy a solid home and stable future is to marry Logan Killicks, an old white man who seems able to give her security.

What Alice Walker designates by the term womanism will fosters the allegiance of women of colour to fight their oppression. An upsurge of organisation and writing among other racial minority women and the stimulus of the United Nation's Decade for Women (1975-1985) led black feminists to identify shared interests as women of colour. Black women are claiming

nowadays that when American democracy could respect a woman of colour, then, all women and all men of colour would find security as well.

Despite these internal differences, gender expectations and limitations are the same for black and white women, the instruments of their oppression are almost the same. As far as their oppression is concerned, black or white, the instruments of the oppression and the negation of women in America are patriarchy as we defined above, sexism, capitalism, racism, traditional and ideological considerations, laws, religion and science.

3. Religion and Culture

Despite the advances in science and technology that have transformed the world into a global village and where some nations have reached an unprecedented level of evolution and that some women somewhere have improved their conditions of life, many women in some traditional religious manner and culturally minded societies still suffer from patriarchal prejudices.

From creation, in the Biblical context, every female owes the male a certain degree of reverence since religion documents “woman is her name because she was taken out of the rib of man” (Gen, 2:23). This shows that the woman is born subordinate to man. However, man has abused the natural concept of subordination by twisting it to satisfy the increasing needs of his lusty (a Freudian term for irrational, illogical and self-aggrandizing pleasures).

The Judeo-Christian tradition based on the Genesis account of woman's creation from Adam's rib and of Eve's punishment for succumbing to the temptation of the serpent's speech, the position of women is described as weak. According to Saint Paul Hebrew law and custom enjoins women to silence in church. Divine law reinforces natural law in excluding women from the public realm and in placing them under male authority.

For the given reason, sexuality is not done anyhow. Indeed, sexuality of any kind was condemned as sinful. Nathaniel Hawthorne insists on that fact when he says in the introduction to The Scarlet Letter that:

The Puritans insist on a thoroughly public society because they believe they need the full energies of each individual for the difficult task of establishing a lasting settlement. Society, civilisation itself, is incompatible with privacy so far as they are concerned.

At this period, there was an indistinct boundary between man and woman but later on, with the industrialisation process, the gap between man and woman become progressively wider.

Women were now confined to the home for a woman to deviate from her assigned role either sexually or intellectually was to violate the word of God as interpreted by the male dominated church and to risk the vengeance of the small, unified community she lived in. The punishment would be the Scarlet Letter as it is the case in Nathaniel Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter.

The manner in which men place themselves above women in religious matters as if both sexes were not equal in God's face. Reverend Dimmesdale commits adultery with Hester Prynne and according to the socio-religious institution of crime and punishment, both victims are supposed to be exposed. Nevertheless, Dimmesdale prefers to conceal himself and impute the consequences of adultery on Hester alone. As a church minister, he is supposed to correct and judge the wrongs of the Christians but he instead uses his religious authority to show how male and superior he is. One can read his saying during the trial:

Open a passage; and I promise ye, Mistress Prynne shall be set where man, woman and child may have a fair sight of her brave apparel, from this time till an hour past meridian. A blessing on the righteous colony of the Massachusetts, where iniquity is dragged out into the sunshine! Come along, Madam Hester, and show your scarlet letter in the marketplace (Hawthorne 51).

The severity of the Puritans, characterized by Baym as a

“Thoroughly public society” that seeks to “bring every aspect of human life under control”, has already been revealed in the opening chapter (“Introduction” 25). Hitherto, we have primarily focused on the consequences of Hester's isolated position in society, but I have paid little attention to the scarlet letter itself and the possible motives of subjecting Hester Prynne to this lifelong, public punishment.

The way in which Hester will be looked upon from this point on is primarily determined by the symbol. Roy Male, for instance, points out that Governor's Bellingham's view towards Hester and Pearl is revealed in the “grotesque, inhuman distortions reflected by the armor” in his hall of entrance (106).

To prove her her strong character , Hester bears her fate and her emblem of sin with such a stoic countenance, only reinforces the idea that the scarlet letter and the ensuing social isolation do not only rob Hester of her femininity (chapter 2.3), but take away her liveliness and human aspects as well.(54)

Society expects Hester to become a sinful woman from her submission to adultery, and punishes her brutally. The scarlet letter she wears as her punishment becomes a personal burden that she must carry according to society's wishes, the mark of her isolation and sadness.

All wrongdoings in a society are committed by women. When Dimmesdale is compelled by his ministerial obligation to judge Hester before the congregation; he experiences the most painful guilt because he is the Adulterer. We are made to understand that during the trial moment; the reverend said:

Heaven hath granted thee an open ignominy, that thereby thou mayest work out an open triumph over the evil within thee, and the sorrow without. Take heed how thou deniest him – who, perchance, hath not the courage to grasp it for himself –the bitter, but wholesome, cup that is now presented to thy lips (Hawthorne p. 67).

With regard to culture, in general terms culture refers to the shared beliefs, values, traditions and behaviour patterns of a particular group. Culture is transmitted from one generation to the next by parents, teachers, religious leaders and other respected members of the cultures. In technological societies, the mass media also convey cultural messages. This process of transmitting culture across generations is known as socialization.

When analysing the basic ingredients in a socio cultural analysis of gender we realized that specific features of culture influence specific aspects of the lives of women and women who are the protagonists in the novels under study. Key elements of culture are described and illustrated. These include norms roles, social status, stereotypes, ideology and values .This means that being a woman or man depends on the person's sociocultural context.

In fact, the lives of women and men are shaped in crucial ways by the social and cultural worlds they inhabit .Based on the New-historicism, culture varies in many other aspects of male-female relations. Black and white American conditions of life portrayed in the novels under study are not the same due to the influence of the respective culture and legacy of their own past and environment Edna, Isabel, and Hester Prynne's conditions of life are not the same as that of Janie and Celie. Pontellier in The Awakening reproaches his wife for not respecting her normal position at home to take care of children as one can read in this excerpt.

He reproached his wife with her inattention, her habitual neglect of the children. If it was not a mother's place to look after children, who's on earth was it? He himself had his hands full with his brokerage business.

He could not be in two places at once; making a living for his family on the street, and staying at home to see that no harm befell them"

(Kate : 31).

By society's standards and culture, it is acceptable to beat one's wife. The exercise of violence is even expected of a husband as the proper treatment of a woman. Celie does not resist this horrible treatment at the beginning of the novel,

He beat me lik he beat the children. Cept he don't never hardly beat them. He say, Celie, git the belt. The children be outside the room peeking through the cracks. It all I can do not to cry. I make myself wood. I say to myself, Celie, you a tree. That's how come I know trees fear man (Walker 23).

Celie's husband treats her like she's just another child whom he can abuse and dictate his will to. He thrusts her into fear and uncertainty. His treatment forces her to harden herself, to become unfeeling.

CONCLUSION

American women, black and white alike, have both faced social, economic and political obstacles to their diverse ambitions. As portrayed in the novels under study, the American women of the 19th and 20th centuries have been victims of much subjugations, which began with the industrial revolution. The division of labour and the ideology of womanhood and domesticity were too disabling; because of the ideal of the angel in the house which called for women to be sympathetic, unselfish and pure. Added to this suffering, black as women have suffered also because of the color of their skin in a racial society

From this analysis, we realize that woman appears to fill in America the very station for which she was designed by nature. In the lowest conditions of life, she is treated with the tenderness and respect that is due to beings that we believe to be the repositories of the better principles of our nature. Retired within the sacred precincts of her own abode, she is preserved from the destroying taint of excessive intercourse with the world. She makes no bargains beyond those which supply her own little personal wants and her heart is not early corrupted by the baneful and unfeminine vice of selfishness. She must be sought in the haunts of her domestic privacy and not amid the wrangling, deceptions and heart-burnings of keen and sordid traffic. The traditional woman was forced to accept male superiority without questioning. Her place was in the kitchen, childbearing and the farm. Her respect and honor were therefore minimized to the manner in which she combines and execute these menial functions. Women have always worked at unpaid work. Obviously, men's work is valued more highly than women's work. The sexual division of labor was found to be not just a division but a hierarchy of labor and not just

one of labor but primarily a sexual division of value and rewards. The lower value of women's work continues through economic and cultural mediation in employment outside the home. We have examined the 19th and 20th century American women relegated to a low status as a result of the oppressive and exploitative tendencies of patriarchy, sexism, religion, culture and racial consideration.

The division amongst feminisms included, the relationship between gender oppression, the oppression based on class, race and nationality, homosexuality, female circumcision, birth and population control confirm that feminism is not monolithic but constitute the political expression of the concerns and interests of women from different regions, classes, nationalities and ethnic backgrounds. There is and must be a diversity of feminisms, responsive to the different needs and the concerns of women and defined by them for themselves. This diversity builds on a common opposition to gender oppression and hierarchy which, however, is only the first step in articulating and acting upon a political agenda.

In their grievance whether isolated or inexperienced, many short-lived organisations for women were formed. Some women managed to survive the battle for their oppression, thus, the first strike by women is revealing itself in various forms. These reactions has been the concern of this article.

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