



ISSN: 2249-7315

Vol. 11, Issue 10, October 2021

SJIF –Impact Factor = 8.037 (2021)

DOI: 10.5958/2249-7315.2021.00139.8

REDEVELOPMENT OF CRITICAL TERMS AND RECOGNITION IN POST-FEMINIST MEDIA CRITICISM

Dr. Vipin Jain*

*Teerthanker Mahaveer Institute of Management and Technology,
Teerthanker Mahaveer University, Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh, INDIA
Email id: vipin555@rediffmail.com

ABSTRACT

Confusion and conflict characterize popular feminism in the US around the turn of the century. We appear to have reached an alternative linguistic world where words may connote both meaning and opposing meaning, where labels are more important than the theory behind the label. For example, feminists debate anti-feminism, post-feminism, Third-Wave Feminism, Women of Color Feminism, and Power Feminism. Second-wave feminist views including liberal, radical, cultural, socialist, and Marxist feminisms are still around. Variant usage of the same word, often according to the writer's country context, add to current misunderstanding about what feminism implies and its various modifiers imply. People magazine or the dramatic adolescent television series Dawson's Creek have both made references to post-feminism. These sources may reach a large audience, but seldom recognize the importance of using terms like post-feminism or explain their meaning to people unfamiliar with theoretical arguments. Despite the debate over terminology, feminism remains a crucial viewpoint for identifying and resolving current oppressions and inequalities. This theoretical ambiguity stems from the development of feminist views and lived experiences since the peak of second-wave feminism. Change and growth are anticipated.

KEYWORDS: *Criticism, Feminist, Feminism, Mary Tyler Moore Show, Post-feminism.*

1. INTRODUCTION

A recent trend in feminist criticism in the United States has been to focus on the representations of women on television rather than on feminist discourse in general. This is most likely a result of the relatively new phenomenon of raising ideas that are easily identifiable as feminist in television texts. Television programmes presenting feminist discourses were first broadcast only 30 years ago, and even then they were cautious in their presentation, often veiling the politics of feminism behind the figure of the new woman, a construct associated with both commercialism and feminism in the same episode. According to researchers, a variety of events that happened in the 1970s contributed to make white, middle-class women an even more attractive demographic for marketers than they had previously been, the most significant of which was advertisers' discovery of working women. Although women had always been the primary target audience for television advertisers because of their perceived influence over the majority of household purchases, their

importance increased as a result of the increased number of upper middle-class women entering the workforce, as well as the economic and technological changes that occurred in the 1970s and 1980s[1].

A common misconception among advertisers was that these professional women controlled a large portion of their discretionary money and had more disposable income to spend than housewives. In a similar vein, Lauren Rabinovitz argues that feminist programming emerged in the 1970s as a result of the organization of new marketing data into a greater number of demographic categories, as well as what she recognizes as the simultaneous coming-of-age of a more independently minded female generation, and that it was good business. In the 1970s, the cultural engagement with women's emancipation indicated to marketers that programming targeting the most desired demographic would be most effective. The discourses and portrayals of upper-class, professional women may be inscribed with more liberal messages and images than had traditionally been associated with women on television. feminism became an important strategy, argues Rabinowitz, because it met the needs of American television executives who wanted to develop programming that could be identified with target audiences that they could measure and deliver to advertising agencies, rather than simply addressing feminism in general.

The introduction of explicit feminist discourses in sitcoms such as *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* (1970–1977), *Maude* (1972–1978), and *Rhoda* (1974–1978) signaled an attempt to reach women who were experiencing changes in their economic and familial status through stories that were infused with consciousness-raising perspectives and lifestyle politics, as demonstrated by *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* (1970–1977), *Maude* (1972–1978), and *Rhoda* (1974–1978)[2]. Historically, feminist discourses on television have tended to correspond to aspects of feminism that have been explored by US culture as women's roles have been renegotiated, beginning with Robert Deming's definition of the new woman role as "take-charge roles" rather than "family roles," as opposed to "traditional family roles." As a single woman, Mary Richards portrayed herself as a satisfied person who did not need a heterosexual partner in order to establish her identity. That this was integrally linked to her position as a working woman, for whom employment was not only viewed as a precursor to marriage, but also as a replacement for marriage, was critical.

Despite the fact that Mary dated a number of different men throughout the course of the series, she was never depicted as struggling to balance the demands of a relationship with her responsibilities at WJM-TV, despite the fact that she was positioned as both daughter and mother in the show's family of co-workers. The importance of this image is made clear by the cultural context in which it was created. Mary, which aired from 1970 to 1977, debuted at the same time as many of the most well-publicized initiatives of second-wave feminism in the United States to achieve equal rights for women. The liberal feminist movement's fight for equal treatment of women in the workplace played a crucial role in the effort to gain access to all areas of the public sector.

Television often utilized the workplace as a setting for presenting and discussing feminist issues throughout the 20 years of television representation that elapsed between *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* and the current programmes that I will discuss later in this piece. Through the 1980s, despite continuing representational gains for female workers in fictional television texts, numerous media sources concurrently disseminated discourses of concern about the status and well-being of the family as a counter-narrative to feminist achievements[3]. Anxiety-inducing tropes were widely disseminated in the popular media as part of a hegemonic attempt to reverse feminist achievements. The appearance of biological clock metaphors, which causes women to fear that they will be unable to have children if they wait too long, and the dissemination of statistical figures stating that women over 30 have a better chance of being killed by a terrorist than they do of marrying, which causes women to fear that they will be unable to have both a professional and a personal life at the same time

1.1 Studying Feminism Via the Medium of Television:

The study of female audiences, traditionally genres such as soap operas, representational strategies used in depicting women, femininity, and feminism, production histories of women working in the television industry, and political economy studies of women who watch television are just a few examples of the many forms that feminist television criticism takes. In most of this work, which focuses on television programmes in the United States, academics use three primary strategies in order to examine the ways in which television scripts express feminist ideals. In many cases, a particular emphasis is placed on female characters, character types, or a depiction of a character's subjectivity, as evidenced by analyses of the new woman of *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, examinations of the new woman's development in the 1980s, the unruly woman character, or through comparisons of characters to a typology of character classifications. The narrative techniques and problems found in series or episodes dealing with feminist themes are examined using a different method to analyzing feminist material on television[4].

The connection between feminist content and narrative organization, as well as the strategic use of narrative form, representational codes, and looking structures in feminist texts, have all been examined via formal studies. A third approach analyses feminism as a theme, trope, or discourse, with each having a somewhat different emphasis but a comparable technique in terms of approach and method. In studies that examine feminism as a topic or discourse, researchers may find patterns in how it is represented or list features of feminist beliefs that are often seen in television shows. Because postfeminist views are most effectively integrated in this manner, I provide a more in-depth examination of this third method, beginning with a consideration of basic discursive tendencies and progressing to an examination of important works after that[5].

2. DISCUSSION

Despite the fact that post-feminism is not a new concept, its usage has grown considerably in the last decade. Women's liberation activist Susan Faludi traces the earliest usage of post-feminism to the 1920s newspapers, when it was used to acknowledge the advances achieved by women's liberation in a manner that implied that feminist action was no longer required. It was in the post-second-wave era that Deborah Rosenfelt and Judith Stacey coined the term "post-feminism," which they defined as "an emerging culture and ideology that simultaneously incorporates, revises, and depoliticizes many of the fundamental issues advanced by second-wave feminism."

Post-feminism has been used in critical academic circles ever since. It was in 1991 that the word saw a revival in media study, when a group of feminist media scholars started applying similar concepts of post-feminism to different forms of media content. During the 1980s, Faludi used the term "post-feminism" to characterize the view that women simply no longer care about feminism. This perspective, she believes, was especially apparent in news media portrayals of women's attitudes toward feminism during that time period. Using post-feminism as a definition for the anti-feminist spirit she discovers in 1980s fictional television, Andrea Press argues that post-feminism signifies a retreat from feminist ideas that challenge women's traditional role in the family, and instead indicates an increasing openness toward traditional notions of femininity and feminine roles[6].

Finally, feminist cinema scholar Tania Modleski proposes that post-feminism believes that the objectives of feminism have been achieved, a rhetoric she sees in films from the 1980s and 1990s (1991). Dow, in her 1996 evaluation of television programming from 1970 to 1996, brings this broad idea of post-feminism back to the forefront again. Her description of post-feminism as being ambivalent toward second-wave goals and achievements is based on the argument that post-feminism is the result of a hegemonic negotiation of second-wave ideals, in which the presumption of equality for women in the public sphere has been

retained, while those ideals centered on sexual politics and a profound awareness of power differences between the sexes [4] have been dismissed as irrelevant or trite

It is essential to remember that Faludi, Press, Modleski, and Dow are all theorists who are based in the United States and write in English. A large number of feminist media scholars working in the United Kingdom and New Zealand interpret post-feminism in a manner that differs considerably from the negative evaluation of post-feminism apparent in the terminology employed by these US-based feminist media academics. Perspectives on post-feminism are not solely defined by national context; nonetheless, there seem to be parallels between those who have shared experiences in the fight for women's emancipation and those who have not. In some ways, the histories of other Western nations are similar to the US differences between first and second wave feminism, however such classifications lose their usefulness when feminism is seen as a global movement and media texts that are not restricted to national borders. Independent of particular national experiences and feminist histories, examining different understandings of post-feminism may be helpful in explaining emergent representational patterns in the United States and in fostering discussions outside of the United States[7].

When writing on postmodern feminism in 1994, British cultural studies scholar Angela McRobbie erred on the side of caution and entered the territory of post-feminist, which was a problematic turn. The integration of certain postmodern thought into the theoretical basis of feminism is critical in her articulation of post-feminism, as she points out. McRobbie argues that the need for this new feminism has arisen as a result of changes in the subject of feminism, criticism of feminism by black women who have experienced exclusion from mainstream feminist movements, and dramatic changes in the societies in which feminism operates, among other factors.

Some feminists have expressed concern about the possible deconstructive excesses of postmodernism, which McRobbie replies to by saying that post-feminism does not remove the subject or the ego, but rather finds it in operation as a succession of piece parts in the concrete world of social interactions. In spite of the fact that McRobbie addresses these theoretical issues in a book that examines popular culture, her contribution is more of a description of postfeminist theory than an applied notion of postfeminist discourse or representation that could develop in mediated form. The first characteristic of post-feminism in current television shows is represented by narratives that examine the various relationships to power that women occupy. Female characters that are multifaceted and different from one another, despite the universality of femininity, may be created through shows that display this characteristic, as highlighted in the idea developed by certain women of color feminists. Various axes for showing different views on female experience and social possibilities may be found in the varied ways ethnicity, class, education, sexuality, age or generation, marital status, motherhood, and ability all place women in society[8].

The depiction of this characteristic draws attention to the ways in which women's closeness to power systems, such as patriarchy and capitalism, may cause them to perceive their subjectivity in a variety of ways that are depending on the environment in which they live. All women, even feminists, are not afforded the same opportunities and opportunities are not afforded to them. This characteristic differs from liberal feminist discourses that emphasize the commonality, or presumed sisterhood, of all women[9]. Among other things, the Lifetime television series *Any Day Now* frequently displays this characteristic in its plots about the challenges to a lifelong friendship faced by its two main characters, Rene, an African American single lawyer who is financially successful, and Mary Elizabeth, a white housewife from a working-class family. The ladies often discuss the ways in which they see daily life differently as a consequence of their differing subjectivities, as well as the ways in which they have differing views on topics such as abortion, which are similarly influenced by each woman's background and identity[10].

3. CONCLUSION

Again, I do not mean to imply that these are the only characteristics of post-feminism that can be seen in current American television shows, but they do seem to be the most prevalent and prominent. In order to further debates concerning the ways in which postfeminist theory emerges in media texts, it is critical that we take this first step toward applying postfeminist theory to media forms. Brooks, McRobbie, and Gamble have all made significant contributions to theoretical work that has enabled this application in the form of defining characteristics to be realized. The identification of qualities then helps academics who want to use them in textual criticism, define additional attributes, or investigate such discursive forms and representations in different settings as a result of the identification of characteristics. All of this work on the many kinds of feminism that can be found in current American television scripts adds to the substantial body of work that has already been done on the depiction and dissemination of feminist ideas in media. In order to identify and explore textual developments, feminist media scholarship must adopt new methods of identification and exploration as theorists recognize new ways of understanding power and gender circulating in societies, and as the women living in those societies redefine their concerns and priorities.

REFERENCES

1. R. Momin and W. Anne, "What Really Matters?: The Elusive Quality of the Material in Feminist Thought," *Fem. Theory*, 2003.
2. H. W. Holladay, "How far we've come?: Nostalgia and post- feminism in Mad Men," *Particip. J. Audience Recept. Stud.*, 2016.
3. L. Bradshaw, "The Critical Investigation of HBO's Girls: Feminist Text, Quality, and Happy Womanhood," *Spectator-The Univ. South. Calif. J. Film Telev.*, 2014.
4. B. Ackerly and J. True, "Reflexivity in practice: Power and ethics in feminist research on international relations," *Int. Stud. Rev.*, 2008, doi: 10.1111/j.1468-2486.2008.00826.x.
5. W. Spiegelman, "Bodies Swayed to Music," *Yale Rev.*, 2008, doi: 10.1111/j.0044-0124.2004.00809.x.
6. K. Henwood and N. Pidgeon, "Remaking the Link: Qualitative Research and Feminist Standpoint Theory," *Fem. Psychol.*, 1995, doi: 10.1177/0959353595051003.
7. Y. huei Wang, C. Y. Chao, and H. C. Liao, "Poststructural feminist pedagogy in English instruction of vocational-and-technical education," *High. Educ.*, 2011, doi: 10.1007/s10734-010-9327-5.
8. M. Zimdars, "Having it both ways: Two and a Half Men, Entourage, and televising post-feminist masculinity," *Fem. Media Stud.*, 2018, doi: 10.1080/14680777.2017.1308411.
9. J. Dean, "Contested feminisms in the British quality press," *Feminist Media Studies*. 2010, doi: 10.1080/14680777.2010.514112.
10. C. Sylvester, "The elusive arts of reflexivity in the 'sciences' of international relations," *Millenn. J. Int. Stud.*, 2013, doi: 10.1177/0305829812463479.