

Women's Writing

The three waves of feminism

Feminism

- The advocacy of women's rights on the ground of the equality of the sexes.
- The term “feminism” coined by the French philosopher, Charles Fourier.
- The term feminism describes political, cultural, and economic movements that aim to establish equal rights and legal protections for women.
- Over time, feminist activists have campaigned for issues such as women’s legal rights, especially in regard to contracts, property, and voting; body integrity and autonomy; abortion and reproductive rights, including contraception and prenatal care; protection from domestic violence, sexual harassment, and rape; workplace rights, including maternity leave and equal pay; and against all forms of discrimination women encounter.

The Waves of Feminism

- Feminist history can be divided into three waves.
- The first wave, occurring in the 19th and early 20th century, was mainly concerned with women's right to vote.
- The second wave, at its height in the 1960s and 1970s, refers to the women's liberation movement for equal legal and social rights.
- The third wave, beginning in the 1990s, refers to a continuation of, and a reaction to, second-wave feminism.

The First-wave



- First-wave feminism promoted equal contract and property rights for women, opposing ownership of married women by their husbands.
- 1840s-1850s: reform movements that coalesced with the Seneca falls convention in 1848.
- Seneca falls convention, originally known as Women's Rights convention, fought for the social, civil and religious rights for women.
- Led by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott and others.
- By the late 19th century, feminist activism was primarily focused on the right to vote.
- American first-wave feminism ended with passage of the 19th Amendment to the US Constitution in 1919, granting women voting rights.

The Second-wave



- Second-wave feminism of the 1960s-1980s focused on issues of equality and discrimination.
- Also called as Women's right movement, Women's liberation movement.
- The second-wave slogan, "The Personal is Political," identified women's cultural and political inequalities as inextricably linked and encouraged women to understand how their personal lives reflected sexist power structures.
- Focus: Wide range of issues, sexuality, family, the workplace, reproductive rights, educational equality, sports equality, violence against women, legal inequalities.
- Expands significantly from the first wave feminism which was just centered on suffrage.
- Organization: Women began to develop political groups, community organization, and informal networks to pursue their goals.

The Second-wave



- Betty Friedan was a key player in second-wave feminism. In 1963, her book *The Feminine Mystique* criticized the idea that women could find fulfillment only through childrearing and homemaking. According to Friedan's New York Times obituary, her book “ignited the contemporary women's movement in 1963 and as a result permanently transformed the social fabric of the United States and countries around the world” and “is widely regarded as one of the most influential nonfiction books of the 20th century.”
- Friedan hypothesizes that women are victims of false beliefs requiring them to find identity in their lives through husbands and children. This causes women to lose their own identities in that of their family.

The Third-wave



- Third-wave feminism began in the early 1990s, responding to perceived failures of the second wave and to the backlash against second-wave initiatives.
- This ideology seeks to challenge the definitions of femininity that grew out of the ideas of the second-wave, arguing that the second-wave over-emphasized experiences of upper middle-class white women.
- The third-wave sees women's lives as intersectional, demonstrating how race, ethnicity, class, religion, gender, and nationality are all significant factors when discussing feminism.
- It examines issues related to women's lives on an international basis.

THE FEMINIST MOVEMENT

a handy reference sheet on the three waves of feminism

First Wave



SUFFRAGE

- 19th and early 20th century
- Focused mainly on suffrage, alongside other legal rights
- Mostly active in the UK, Canada, and United States
- Movement succeeded in gaining women the right to vote & other legal liberties

Second Wave



EQUAL PAY

- Began in the US, then spread to Europe, Asia
- Focused mainly on sexuality, reproductive rights, and the wage gap
- Movement succeeded in securing career options for women, and many reproductive rights

Third Wave



PATRIARCHY

- Fights for equality by focusing exclusively on female victims of gender-neutral issues
- Mostly on Tumblr + Facebook
- Mostly middle/upper class US
- Rejects labelling by adopting labels and identities
- Everything is the Patriarchy's fault, also rape culture

Topics for the next class

Types of Feminism

- Liberal Feminism
- Social Feminism
- Radical Feminism
- Cultural Feminism
- Marxist Feminism
- Eco Feminism
- Black Feminism
- Separatist Feminism
- I-Feminism

Thank You