

The Development and Rationality of Western Feminist Movement

Senlan Xu

College of Marxism, Jiangsu University
Email address: 1406464917@qq.com

Abstract— Western feminist movement is a social movement for women to strive for gender equality and obtain social status and rights. It attracted the majority of women to actively participate, making the thought of feminist spread rapidly. After three movements, numerous feminist theory schools have been formed. They are with fighting for equality between men and women and women's liberation as the core, have experienced a long-term struggle for development, leading the world's women's liberation, promoting the awakening of women's self-consciousness and the protection of women's rights and interests in China. However, western feminism weakens the difference between male and female from the physiological point of view, separates the relationship between women and men from the gender point of view, and isolates the connotation of women as human beings from the human point of view. The rationalization of western feminism can be realized through female economic independence, updating the real definition of female liberation and updating the theory in accordance with the development of The Times.

Keywords— Western Feminism; Development; Rationality.

Feminism first emerged in modern Europe. Since the rise of the Enlightenment in the 17th and 18th centuries, the concept of freedom, equality and democracy has been widely spread among the people. After the French bourgeois revolution, after the baptism of enlightenment thought and the Inspiration of the French Revolution, under the influence and inspiration of the Enlightenment, women raised the flag of liberation movement, and the feminist movement in the West began to sprout.

I. THE DEVELOPMENT OF WESTERN FEMINIST MOVEMENT

Feminism is a practice that women strive for social rights in all aspects and strive to achieve gender equality. As an idea and theory, feminism has a long history of development. With the continuous development of society, feminist thought has experienced different stages of development.

1.1 First wave of feminism

Western feminism originated from the Enlightenment and the French bourgeoisie revolution, rational, natural human rights and freedom and equality ideas gradually inspired people, women's self-consciousness began to awaken under the influence of enlightenment thought, western feminist movement began to sprout. The development of the first industrial Revolution greatly changed the face of the world and people's way of life, brought about great changes in the social structure and had a great impact on people's ideas. More and more women began to show their talents in the field of social production, and the social experience and inspiration they received in these fields prompted them to rethink their own status and value. The number of people who participated in women's liberation gradually increased, and a large-scale feminist movement was formed in the early 20th century. They pursued equal political and economic rights with men, and this feminist movement reached its first climax in the early 20th century.

1.2 Second wave of feminism

The second wave of feminism occurred in the 1960s and 1970s. From the end of the war to the early 1960s, the Great Depression and the World War spread all over the world, which not only brought huge disasters to people, but also provided important opportunities for people to rebuild the society. During this period, western feminists tried to establish their own main space for women. They gradually realized that only by taking an extreme attitude to reject male values and completely eliminating the social system and social concepts under the patriarchal cultural background, could women be further liberated on the basis of fighting for equality between men and women. Although the status of women in post-Western countries improved after the war, women's efforts to strive for equality in politics, economy and education have achieved obvious results. However, patriarchal culture and gender discrimination have not been improved, and there is still a big gap between women's desire for real liberation and real equality between men and women and the objective reality.

1.3 Third wave of feminism

After the 1980s, western feminists changed their previous grand way of struggle and paid more attention to calmly thinking. In the 1980s and 1990s, feminists began to pay more and more attention to academic and cultural studies. On the basis of continuing to study the root causes of gender inequality, postmodernism and other new disciplines and theoretical schools emerged. They shifted their focus from economic and political equality to cultural equality and cultural identity, not only focusing on the differences between men and women, but also the differences within women. However, there are still many differences between the sexes and within the female group that cannot be eradicated. Therefore, they criticize the patriarchal culture and try to construct a pluralistic female discourse system that emphasizes and focuses on differences, gradually weakening the deep influence of patriarchy on the feminism of the first and second waves.

II. THE IDEOLOGICAL EVOLUTION OF WESTERN FEMINIST MOVEMENT

2.1 Liberal feminism

Liberal feminism is the product of the western bourgeois enlightenment in the 18th century. It is a kind of feminism influenced by the ideological trend of liberalism, and it is the starting point of all feminist theories. Liberalism regards freedom, equality and justice as the most important political values. Liberal feminists attach great importance to justice and equal opportunities. They believe that women should also enjoy equal legal rights, political rights and the right to freely choose life with men. However, under the influence of social habits and legal restrictions, women always suffer from discrimination and oppression in the real society. They cannot enjoy the opportunity of fair competition and the right to education, and many women's potential cannot be realized. Therefore, they hope to improve the educational system and economic system, in a gentle way to fight for the same opportunities and rights as men.

2.2 Radical feminism

Radical feminism was formed in the 1960s and 1970s. They tried to find out the root causes of women's oppression and the ways to get rid of them. Radical feminists oppose the patriarchal society and hope to establish women's space and develop women's culture. After profound analysis, they believe that the state is only a tool for patriarchy to oppress women, and patriarchy is the main source of gender inequality. They are subject to the dominance of patriarchy and gender discrimination in the family and society. Radical feminists challenge patriarchy and believe that only by rebuilding the legal system and political structure that oppresses women, breaking through the patriarchal system and transforming the social and cultural structures of the state, society, family and school, can women's Liberation be truly realized.

2.3 Marxist Feminism

Marxist feminism was formed in the early 1970s. It is influenced by Marxist materialist determinism, alienation theory and class analysis. Early Marxist feminists believed that the capitalist system was the root of women's oppression, while later Marxist feminists believed that the combination of capitalist system and patriarchy was the root cause of women's oppression and exploitation. Marxist feminists emphasize that private ownership must be eliminated, the whole capitalist system must be overthrown, the means of production should be owned by the whole people, and women can be economically independent, so that women can eliminate oppression and be liberated. As Marx and Engels said, without the reform of social, political and economic system, women can still not change their oppressed situation, there can be no personality liberation, let alone the free development of personality.

2.4 Socialist Feminism

After the 1960s, socialist feminism was deeply influenced by utopian socialism and the views of Marx and Engels. It advocated combining Marxist materialism and class analysis with radical feminist gender analysis to investigate the causes

and current situation of women's oppression. Socialist feminism regards gender oppression and exploitation as the by-product of class oppression and exploitation, and believes that the combination of patriarchy and capitalism is the root of women's oppression. Socialist feminism puts forward more specific social reform strategies for gender inequality, which requires women to participate more in the social field, give full play to their potential and create broader value. Finally, overthrow the capitalist system, replace capitalism with socialism, change the whole social structure and realize the real liberation of women.

2.5 Postmodern Feminism

Postmodern feminism is a feminist theory and trend of thought rising from the 1980s and 1990s. During this period, they are no longer limited to focusing on women's status and gender issues, but try to re-examine and reflect on the whole western culture, so as to seek a broader living space for women, advocate the reconstruction of gender power relations, and criticize the patriarchal society with postmodern theory, so as to achieve diversification Openness and respect for differences. They strive for and master more discourse rights for women, make women become the subject in the discourse practice system, and put forward the theory that discourse is right.

III. THE CONTEMPORARY VALUE OF WESTERN FEMINISM FOR WOMEN'S LIBERATION

3.1 Leading the liberation of women in the world

Western Feminism has caused people all over the world to think about women's rights and sounded the clarion call for women to declare war on the concept of unequal society. The status and rights of contemporary women in society were influenced by the Western feminist movement to a certain extent and played a leading role in the world women's liberation movement. The formation and development of the ideological and theoretical system of western feminism marks a revolutionary breakthrough of the women's liberation movement. In particular, Marxist feminism uses Marxist class analysis to deeply interpret the issue of women's rights, and also absorbs other feminist theoretical viewpoints, which plays an important role in leading the theoretical thought of women in the world.

3.2 Promoting the awakening of women's self-consciousness

In the development process of western feminism, people pay more and more attention to women's problems, the majority of women's self-consciousness begins to awaken, and women's Liberation continues to move forward. Therefore, the majority of female compatriots realized their own situation and began to strive for equal status and rights, and achieved remarkable success. For example, equality in the rights of education, employment, marital autonomy and participation in political power; Equality in politics, economy, culture, education and other fields. In the process of historical development, the promotion of women's status in people's ideology is the result of the women's movement breaking the shackles of traditional thought, which also fully proves the practical significance of feminism in the struggle for women's liberation.

3.3 Promoting the protection of women's rights and interests in China

The Western feminist movement also has a certain practical value for the cause of women's Liberation in China. China tried to break through the shackles of traditional feudal ethics and advocated freedom and equality. And then no longer completely obey the feudal ritual system; Women's organizations have been set up one after another, cultural publicity activities have been carried out all over the country, and laws and regulations for the protection of women's rights and interests have been gradually improved. In short, western feminism promotes the establishment of the theoretical system of the protection of women's rights and interests in China to a certain extent, so as to promote the development of women's Liberation Movement in practice. At the same time, "investigating this trend of thought is of great significance for us to understand the trend of Contemporary Western women's movement and related social trends, and to understand the socialist trend of thought and its development in contemporary western countries." ① More importantly, caring for women is still an important work in China.

IV. LIMITATIONS OF WESTERN FEMINISM

Feminism draws lessons from Marx's Thought on women's liberation. "The scientificity of Marxism is by no means an abstract dogma divorced from time and space and all specific conditions." ② The same is true of western feminism. Although the concept has been updated, its limitations still exist. We must treat western feminism rationally from a dialectical perspective and from reality.

4.1 Weakening gender from a physiological point of view

Western feminism was initially influenced by the thought of "natural human rights", rigidly taking the equal rights of men and women as the reference standard, and then extended to the level of equality between men and women. This determines that the equality between men and women pursued by Western women's rights is only formal. It is a gender blind obedience based on men's rights. From beginning to end, it has not got rid of its dependence on men's rights and fell into a strange circle of talking about women's rights around men's rights, which is a constraint on women's free development. Feminists believe that there is no difference between men and women in physiology, mental power and other aspects because women should be given the same rights as men the day after tomorrow, which leads to women's eventual weakness. As long as they have the same rights as men, the so-called equality between men and women will be realized. The attitude of not recognizing gender differences has been upgraded from simple neglect to radical elimination. It is believed that only by completely eliminating the physiological differences between men and women can women's freedom and equality be realized. We must think, "are we just like robots, mechanically controlled by emotion through genetic inheritance?" ③ Can women's genetic liberation be achieved?

4.2 Severing women from a gender perspective

Western feminism takes the promotion of women's rights as the core of the struggle, which triggers the awakening of women's awareness of anti-oppression. It is preconceived that gender oppression is the fundamental oppression of human society. Obviously, this view is narrow. Feminists put too much emphasis on the social role of gender oppression, but ignored the historical role of class oppression. As a result, they pointed their attack at patriarchy and could not explore the theory of solving women's problems from the root. Instead, they attributed the evil of patriarchy to the dominant position of men, so as to treat men as enemies and objects of struggle. Some feminists advocate attacking men's superior family status, so as to achieve the purpose of smashing patriarchy. Not to mention how this family struggle model pursues its roots and ends, only from the perspective of Gender Opposition of feminism, feminism not only does not touch the essential roots of a series of problems such as women's oppression, and can not correctly treat gender relations, but also makes women in a more isolated situation, resulting in men's indifference and resistance to women's liberation.

4.3 Isolating women from a human perspective

Western Feminism's vision of women's issues is not broad enough, and its attitude towards women's issues is biased. It blindly emphasizes women's issues and cannot bring women's issues into the macro background of human society for discussion and analysis. Feminists only regard women as women and do not realize that women are an important part of human structure. Therefore, they ignore the deep reasons for the existence of women's problems in human history, and can not explore the way out of women's liberation from the height of history. Feminism isolates women from human connotation and separates women's problems from human problems, which leads them to be unable to deeply explore women's liberation as an important task and composition of human liberation. Such a one-sided emphasis on "women's rights" will eventually be difficult to break through women's own limitations, and feminist theory is certainly difficult to obtain more in-depth development.

V. THE PATH OF RATIONALIZATION OF CONTEMPORARY FEMINISM

5.1 Women's economic independence

Contemporary feminism can find a reasonable path through the rational absorption, reference and application of Marx's thought of women's liberation. Avoiding blindly emphasizing physical gender, and focus on the relationship between culture, system and rights based on gender. The physiological gender differences and the deep oppression of material production on women can only be realized through women's economic independence. Women can get rid of the shackles of family economy and obtain more ideological independence from economic independence by participating in social production independently, so as to get rid of the economic dependence on men and create a good economic foundation for women's liberation.

5.2 Updating liberation definition

We should not pursue women's "personality liberation" unilaterally, and strengthen women's subject consciousness completely through the transformation of inherent gender relations. Because the oppression and exploitation in the capitalist society is the root cause of the oppression of women's rights. We should not only pay attention to the equal rights of men and women from the perspective of gender, but also regard the degree of women's liberation as the natural standard of human liberation. Otherwise, it will actually restrict the free development of women and hinder the liberation process of all mankind. Only by establishing the concept that women's liberation is an important part of human liberation and promoting women's liberation is to promote the liberation of all mankind. In other words, women are also the builders of communism and the "half sky" of the cause of human liberation.

5.3 Conforming to the development of the times

John Rawls imagines that all citizens of a society gather and decide to negotiate a new social contract. This state is only an extreme phenomenon in the process of promoting reality and history. In fact, this "social contract" is people's "consensus". Western Feminism has experienced a long historical stage from formation, development to stability, and even the most mature theory should adapt to the times, constantly update and improve. If Western Feminism wants to seize the forefront of the times, it must carry out diversified development and evolution with the progress of history and social changes. Only by always standing on the height of promoting human development and macroscopically discussing and studying women's issues can we have more abundant value of the times.