

Second wave of feminism:

The second wave of feminism emphasizes upon women's liberation movement, whose aim was achieving legal and social equality and specially ending discrimination between men and women. No particular boundary is observed in between the two waves except some addition of some new goals along with the continuation of the first wave of feminism which added a new term called second wave. The term first wave was coined in 1963, only after the need of the second and thereafter, it was named so. This name also differs from Julia Kristeva to Maggie Humm. Julia calls this the 'second phase' in her essay, "Two Generations", and Maggie Humm names it 'the second wave' in his book, *A Readers' Guide to Contemporary Feminist Criticism*. The feminist criticism condensed much more deeply than the earlier, during the second wave letting in many more branches of feminism, and many more feminists with their new aesthetic and psychological experiences poured with advanced knowledge and their philosophies, keeping the motif of the upliftment of the women and harmony of the society bringing equality between men and women. It is also called as liberation movement, adding some new modes to it. The first wave of feministic movement brought a remarkable influence in the socio-political life of many nations. Political and economic parity were the main concerns by then and most of the claims of the first wave were complied and women education got an opportunity to be spread and simultaneously brought a remarkable change in the consciousness or the thought process in the women as well as in the society. Rejection of the one-sided religious bigotry giving priority to patriarchal society was another media they rebelled against to create a new culture and dimension. Besides all the above points, the second wave also included rape as an oppression over women during the second wave.

To make the second wave successful many feminist writers turned up with their revolutionary and resenting pen towards the society. Any movement gets publicity and success followed with literature. Literature gradually is reshaped into literary criticism and this literary criticism intensified the movement to scroll ahead towards a remarkable advancement. A crucial theme in second wave criticism was 'gender discriminations and inequalities' (Syed 8). The second wave of feministic movement continued mainly with literary manoeuvres. Feministic criticism became a very useful media to aggravate the movement with the significance of the images of women to counter the patriarchal culture. Maggie Humm exemplifies, "those pioneering texts- Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* and Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics*-both argue that 'literature' is as important a means of patriarchal power as the family" (Humm, Reader.33). And many more women feminists came forward with their pens stockpiling them as sharp weapons to counter the male dominated writings and the culture. The women writings now no more was left unnoticed. With them, began the celebration of womanhood, which once upon a time was considered to be a curse and a taboo. The body of a woman with her desire began to be acknowledged, no more banning it as a taboo. The second wave feminists prioritised the self of the women, and their subjectivity which had been ignored since a long

history. Identity of women began to be sought after by most of them with full independence of their own. The second wave feminists focussed also on gender indiscrimination. This wave gave a new dimension to the nobodaddy's so called great works to be sexist and at the same time explored the archived palimpsest women writings which were once upon a time valued with condensation. Most of the feminists during this wave emphasized upon the 'social construction of gender' and its 'biological difference', while attacking upon the patriarchal culture. Through the feministic criticism the women writers ventured to create a separate language of their own and emphasized upon the women writing (gynotexts), abandoning the man created and man inhabited language and their works. Even feminists have created a new dictionary with a set of feministic terms, to be used by the female writers, leaving behind the male created terms. The age-old legendary myths too are attacked by the feminists calling these myths as masculine construct, which is created as suited to them (men) to facilitate for their service and in its place, they escavated the original feminine myths and restructured it with 'a new narrative image and convention' for women, diverting it from the andocentric value to a gynocentric one. New psychological exploration was ventured with symbolic dimensions to it. The new feminists jotted down aiming at arousing psychologically, the female consciousness for a better comprehension of the difference in the thought process of men and the women. They linked feminism politically and psychologically as a model of repression' (Syed 15). The second wave feminists also show their concern with the colour differences along with sexual and class differentiation. The second wave feminists dare to challenge against heterosexuality and male supremacy and to strengthen the relationship between 'woman to woman', leaving aside the relation with the man. The second wave feminists worked to fight for ending women's oppression and ending the women's economic dependence and with it they urged women to create their own economic status diminishing the patriarchal domination of finances over women. Above all, the common motto of most of the feminists is, 'how to describe and subvert the cultural repression of women' (Humm, Reader 33). Different feminists from different parts of the world came forward to postulate their individual philosophies and adopted many new ways and techniques to counter the age-old patriarchal system and to throw away the dominance of men over women.

In France, the most influential feminist revolution came out from the outrageous, revolutionary writers during the 1970s, which had begun with the students' unrest in 1968. The feminists focussed mainly on transformation of signifying practices and conceptions of subjectivity, based on a radical understanding of power of language. The popular feminists by then who attacked upon the ideas of Jacques Lacan and Jacques Derrida, whose theories were quite appealing to the feminists, by then were; Annie Leclerc, Marguerite Duras, Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray, and Helene Cixous. The four front bench leading French women, Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray, H el ene Cixous, and Monique Wittig, during the second wave shared a common goal to oppose, masculinist thinking, and upon the phallogocentric culture; though their modes they adopted are different from each other. They variously participated in advancing a notion of l'ecriture feminine, a feminine writing that would issue from the unconscious, the body, from a radically reconceived subjectivity, in an endeavor to circumvent what they held to be phallogocentric discourse. Some other feminists such as Christine Faure, and Catherine Clement, have challenged this emphasis on the body as biologically reductive, fetishistic, and politically impotent. Monique Wittig wished to do away with the linguistic categories of sex and gender.

America, during the second wave had gathered high stimulation from the 1960s civil rights movement and prepared their manoeuvre in their own way. Betty Friedan's *Feminine Mystique* (1963) containing the middle class American women in their public and private life gained much acknowledgement and repercussions over the Americans. Hence forth came the showering of feminist writings such as: Mary Ellman's *Thinking About Women* (1968), Kate Millet's *Sexual politics* (1969), Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch* (1970), and many more later on, expounding the theme of gender discrimination. Caroline Heilbrun and Judith Fetterly too assimilated themselves with their observations of the masculine portrayals of women. Some other feminist texts such as Patricia Meyer Spacks' *The Female Imagination* (1975), Ellen Moer's *Literary Women* (1976) and Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *The Mad Woman in the Attic* (1979) spread their concepts on the neglected women writings in the domain of the patriarchal society where all the rules and regulations were made by men. Elaine Showalter's *A Literature of their Own: British women*

Novelists from Bronte to Lessing(1977) gave a vivid explication of the three phases of the women's writings in the past.

British Feminist movement's, second wave current's beginning can be attributed to Virginia Woolf with her book, *Women: The Longest Revolution*, and *Women's Estate*(1971) though she herself denies to be called a feminist. But, before Woolf, in the field of feminist literature Jane Austin had already addressed the restricted lives women faced in the early part of the century. Charlotte Bronte, Ann Bronte, Elizabeth Gaskell and George Eliot too had delineated the miserable suppressed life of women. Juliet Mitchell's *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* came in 1974, expounding the patriarchal society on the basis of a Marxist viewpoint. Other critics during then who followed the predecessors are; Jacqueline Rose, Rosalind Coward, Catherine Belsey, joined the movement to lead it to progress. Some others as Judith Newton, Deborah Rosenfelt, Penny Boumelha, Cora Kaplan, Mary Jacobus, got themselves associated with the British Feminist movement and became a part in it. Kanwar Dinesh Singh's quote of Toril Moi, the Norwegian feminist critic will be applicable to sum up the whole as Moi puts it in her essay, "Feminist Literary Criticism" : "to express their own female anger in a series of duplicitous textual strategies whereby both the angel and the monster, the sweet heroine and the raging madwoman, are aspects of the author's self-image, as well as elements of her treacherous anti-patriarchal strategies" (qtd. in Singh 15).

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