

A Probe into the Formation of Feminism in the United States in the Late 19th Century

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DOI: [10.36347/sjahss.2020.v08i09.002](https://doi.org/10.36347/sjahss.2020.v08i09.002)

| Received: 24.08.2020 | Accepted: 31.08.2020 | Published: 04.09.2020

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Abstract

Review Article

During the late 19th century in the United States, the first feminism emerged and developed. And the basis of feminism thought system has been formed into. The education, the culture and living environment of American women at that time are analyzed in this paper, thus probing into the formation of feminism in the United States of that time.

Keywords: industrialization; feminist thought; elementary system; formation.

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INTRODUCTION

At the end of the 19th century, the feminism trend of thought that came with industrialization had taken shape. On the one hand, it inherited the critical thinking of early feminism and the importance of self-development. On the other hand, it also emphasized the role of irrational, intuitive and common parts in life. The main representatives of this trend of thought were Fuller, Stanton, Anthony, Gage, Gilman and so on. The formation of its ideological trend was closely related to the social environment, women's unique culture, education, international environment and new perspectives of women's issues.

Definition of feminism

Feminism, originated from the west, is understood as a social theory and political movement, which is mainly based on women's experience and motivation. Feminism first appeared in France, which meant women's liberation, then spread to Britain and America, and gradually became popular. In the west, it initially referred to the pursuit of gender equality. In the 1920s-1930s, women in western countries basically fought for equal political rights, but they were still unequal to men in social life and people's minds. Feminists began to realize that there was a gender relationship and gender power problem, so the feminist movement has become an analysis of why men and women were not equal, the power structure of men and women, and the emphasis on gender analysis.

At present, in the United States, it is of great significance to use feminism to study gender power, and it is easy for people to accept it. Feminism is a combination of theory and practice, a belief and ideology of equality between men and women, aiming at combating all inequalities including gender discrimination. Feminism refers to a kind of female thought, social speech and political assistance behavior that women strive for equality with men and embody women's self-spirit and energy. Feminism in the United States refers to women's thoughts, social remarks and political assistance that women strive for equality with men and embody women's self-spirit and energy. Equality between men and women is the most basic goal of feminism. While striving for equality with men, women should also pay attention to their own value performance, show their unique charm, tap and give full play to women's social power, strive for the emancipation of women's thoughts and behaviors at all levels of society, put the interests of women all over the world at the same starting point, and assist the government in dealing with the problems faced by feminism.

The impact of industrialization on women

The rapid development of the industrial revolution at the end of the 19th century accelerated the pace of modernization in the United States. The rapid development of modernization has brought changes in social structure and social concepts. A large number of women entered factories for employment, or entered schools for education, and actively engaged in various

charitable activities and even participated in the continuous social reform movement, etc., all of which prompted them to re-establish their social roles. Engels once pointed out that "women's liberation is only possible when women can participate in production on a large scale and on a social scale, while housework only accounts for a very small amount of their time." Industrialization offers this possibility to women. Their extensive participation in social and economic activities has provided a population for their liberation, but also caused multiple impacts.

Women's educational status

In particular, there was sufficient time and certain financial basis and conditions to receive the knowledge that can not be given by general education. But for the vast majority of American women, work was just a short transition before marriage. The traditional view of women still believed that women's work was to take care of the family and children. Therefore, many women who used to work would quit their jobs and return to their families after marriage. In 1900, only 5% of all married women worked outside to earn money. By the year of 1910, the figure had only risen to 10%, and it was mostly forced by life. Although there were widespread gender discrimination and low wages in American women's employment during this period, compared with the past, industrialization undoubtedly increased the number of women in employment and expanded the scope of women's employment. The economic independence of American women inevitably led to the change of women's educational status and marriage status.

Industrialization has brought about an improvement in women's education. Long before the civil war, some innovative people had set up private colleges for women. Many states have also set up institutions for training teachers, known as "normal schools", which absorbed a large number of girls to attend. After the civil war, universities for women were springing up. In particular, from 1890 to 1900, the number of female students in Colleges and universities increased from 140000 to 283000, with the proportion of female students in the total number of students increasing from 40% to 47.3%. In addition, a small number of female students entered graduate school. From 1893, for example, when Kate Ernest Levi became the first American woman to receive a doctorate in history, "by 1900, eight women had received this degree." Women can not only enter the fields of law and medicine, which are respected by people, but also their new education provided them with new ideas of self-confidence and commenting on things. They began to ask themselves, "what is the purpose of my higher education?" This idea played a leading role in their identifying their actual status in American society, as well as laying a good ideological foundation for women to engage in feminist theoretical research.

Women's new education improved their employment rate, and also provided them with new concepts of self-confidence and comment on things. The changes of family model and family function brought by industrialization have greatly changed the status and role of women in the family.

First, women's attitudes towards marriage and childbirth have changed dramatically. The increase of personal independence and the emergence of core families brought by industrialization has made women's mate selection become an individual behavior. The economic independence brought about by the industrial revolution has changed the view that marriage is a necessity for survival, and women have postponed their marriage age. By the second decade of the 20th century, it was found that nearly half of female college graduates were unmarried. During this period, the divorce rate increased from 53 / 100000 in 1890 to 73 / 100000 in 1900, and to 12 / 100000 in 1916.

Second, women's economic independence has enhanced their family rights. The improvement of women's economic independence made women get rid of the dependence on men.

Third, industrialization has formed a new concept of family life. This concept of family life was first formed in urban middle-class families, and then recognized by the whole society. In this period, the urban middle class attached great importance to children's childhood, leading mothers to spend more energy on raising children. Due to the serious separation of family and work, family was regarded as a haven away from external competitive pressure. As the guardian of this shelter, women were expected to focus on household chores and children, no longer sharing the financial burden of the family. The husband and wife performed their respective duties, namely, the wife was mainly responsible for housework and raising children, while the husband went to work and earned money to support the family. This concept of family was still restricting people's understanding of women's roles, hindering women's pursuit of career outside the family.

Of course, it is not enough to acquire the knowledge learnt in general education. As feminists who dare to walk in the front of thoughts, they must have their own unique circumstances, knowledge and courage, and struggle for women's rights for those leading ones. No matter how different their social background and psychological factors are, what they have is not just the knowledge of ordinary people; what they learn is not just the knowledge that general education could give at that time. Josephine Saxon Amundsen's father was a typical American with a business mind. He attached great importance to his daughter's education and sent her to study in Cleveland Central Middle School and Woodland Avenue Girls' School. Moreover, Amundsen's mother was also a

radical feminist, whose positive thoughts and behaviors set a good example for her daughter. Ernest Ruth was the daughter of a rabbi, but she was against the Judaism that women had to submit to men. She has always insisted that "women's enemy is not men, we are not fighting against men, but against bad norms." Among the Beecher family of Charlotte P. Gilman, there were many famous social reformers. For example, aunt Harriet Bitch was a famous writer who wrote Uncle Tom's cabin and strongly appealed for the abolition of slavery. Catherine Bitch was a writer who advocated feminism. Isabella Bitch Hooker was a writer who advocated feminism. These elders were actively and openly engaged in the social reform movement. Undoubtedly, it inspired Ms. Gilman's faith and determination in social reform and women's equality.

It is precisely because of the special circumstances of these feminist pioneers that they can probe into all kinds of prejudices that belittle women from the outside to the inside, and tell their criticisms. It has turned into the rich ideological source of feminism at the end of the 19th century.

The ideological rebound of women brought about by industrialization

As Woolf, a British woman writer in the 19th century, believed that women's intellectual freedom depended on the material environment. In the past, women "could only peep at the corner of the world where they lived through the iron bars. They pricked up their ears and hungrily wanted to hear only a few things from men". The development of industrialization and urbanization has opened a window for women to participate in social production and understand the outside world, as well as providing access for them to enter the world. At the end of the 19th century, educated women went out to work as teachers and white-collar workers.

However, when the development was completed and men began to build a new society outside of industry and family, middle-class families in the East and Midwest no longer needed to take advantage of the drive, strength and talents of women pioneers. Women's self-worth was becoming more and more unrealized. In an era of increasing opportunities for men, women's sphere of activity was becoming narrower and narrower. In the late 19th and early 20th century, a South African woman named Oliver Skfuna warned American women that the quality of women's role in society was decreasing as fast as the development of civilization. The warning was a reminder to American women. They have realized the limitations of traditional culture and feel that they were trapped in the net of male culture. Ideology, values, traditional customs and even the knowledge system labeled as "science" and "objective" have become obstacles for them to strive for equality.

In the face of industrialization, the well-educated middle-class women felt the reduction of their development opportunities, especially the rebellious ideas of traditional women's concept and family concept. As Betty Friedan said: "women are human beings, and they should strive to smash the decorations that represent the ideal women. They should strive to prove that women are not passive, only reflecting the external mirror, not a fringed and useless ornament, not a thoughtless animal, not a thing that can't even show its own existence. They must be equal to men before they start to fight for their rights." In the meantime, although their "non female" speech and behavior are often hostile to people, feminists continue their soul exploration expedition.

The emergence and development of new ideological trends

The liberation of women by feminist socialists has many meanings, it is not a single, but a comprehensive liberation of the whole. Generally speaking, it can be summarized as economic liberation, political liberation and ideological liberation. Economic liberation is mainly to free women from economic dependence on men, to free women from exploitation and oppression and to achieve economic independence. Political liberation is not only to obtain equal political rights in law and the implementation of these rights in real political life, but also to free women from the patriarchal power-dominated relationship implied in every field of society. The liberation of ideology and culture is to make the majority of women get rid of the patriarchy which has been binding and dominating their minds for a long time, make them realize their own ability and strength, and establish the sense of self-esteem, self-confidence and self-improvement.

Feminist socialists accepted the Marxist view that the economic structure played a decisive role in the overall social development and believed that economic liberation was of special significance in the overall liberation of women. To this end, they put forward three main ways for women to achieve economic liberation: the first was that women entered the labor market, which advocated that women should have a social career, and women's employment could enable women to have a certain amount of economic income, so that they were no longer economically dependent on their husbands as in the past, thus improving their status in the family. The second was the family labor wage. Women were considered to be paid for domestic work. The third was the socialization of housework. It was an important way to realize women's liberation to transfer part of housework to social work so that women could have more opportunities to engage in social public affairs.

Since the 1970s, with the western feminist movement entering a new stage of development, the theory of feminist socialism has gained great

development, and has had an important impact on the trend of the western feminist movement. Associated with the deepening development of the western feminist movement and the expanding influence of feminist socialism in the feminist movement, the theoretical propositions of feminist socialism have become richer, more complete and more mature. This performance during this period has not only paid attention to the culture and ideology, and other areas of the economic analysis of women's issues, but also displayed in the influence of postmodernism, focusing on the macroscopic analysis of women's issues at the same time. If the feminist socialists in the 1970s and 1980s generally used general methods to study social reality, then in the 1990s, they paid more attention to the study of women's daily life experience and emotions, as well as women's daily struggle against the reality of their liberation inside and outside the family. This made the claim of feminist socialism more complete from theory to practice and played an incomparable role in the feminist movement.

The culture of middle-class women in the late 19th century

At the end of the 19th century, the unique middle class women's culture appeared and began to be combined with the "new ideological movement". Historically, American women have long been asked to set an example for the world with their noble moral sentiments, from the early Puritan women to the "mother of the Republic". At the beginning of the founding of the people's Republic, from the "four virtues" advocated by the "real women" to the virginity emphasized by the Victorian dogma, women were all put in a distant "secular dirty" position, worshipped and admired. Especially in the second half of the 19th century, the American society set many rules and regulations for middle-class women, which raised the purity of women to the supreme position. From the topic of daily life to the behavior and behavior of people's communication, they all defined a forbidden area for women. What's more, in the name of "modern science", the public opinion instilled the idea of "abstinence" into women, including middle-class women.

However, the industrial revolution brought a turning point to women's lives. Industrialization enabled middle-class women in the United States to participate in social activities as the "leisure class", which led to the fierce blocking of women's organizations in the late 19th century. Their active activities led to the emergence of a central theme in women's life at the end of the 19th century - the warm exchanges with other women. The core of the definition of gender in the 19th century was the belief that men and women had different natures, thus occupying different social fields: the field of public affairs should belong to men, and the field of housework should belong to women. In response to the idea of gender roles, the warm

friendship between women prevailed. In the relationship between women who are called "Boston marriage" by modern people, in the passionate communication among women, and in the connection among women around marriage, children and death, women gradually have a unique ideology. During this period, although feminists did not have a complete understanding of the warm friendship growing among women, they realized that noble women were born to surpass Men morally. This view has not only established women's unique status, but also provided a theoretical support for them to move from family and family members' personal world to the public society of reform and mutual connection.

In addition, when it comes to women's unique culture, the "new ideological movement" that rose in the United States from 1875 to 1920 shall be mentioned. It was represented by Beryl Sartre and Hopkins. It was not limited to a specific theme. It adopted a multi-dimensional perspective of cultural research, and believed that "all human beings can control their will ", as well as making a detailed analysis of gender, and combining the "new ideological movement" with the American women's movement at the end of the 19th century. The thought of "We should emphasize women's values and virtues, and allow women to have more space for self-expression and economic independence" came with the industrial revolution, completely breaking the authority of race, class and gender, encouraging individuals to resist the shackles of tradition and pursue freedom, as well as pushing the prosperity of feminism.

In fact, these ideas were part of the mother-rights paradigm and were popular among anthropologists of the time. The feminist emphasis on matriarchy was also an act of resistance to the enslavement of women in the west in the 19th century, as well as a defense against the social Darwinism prevailing in the dominant paradigm of sociology at that time. The struggle of social Darwinism for its own existence and development was reflected in feminist thoughts and became a weapon for fighting for equality. In *Women In the 19th Century* (1845), Margaret Friel, a matriarch of cultural feminism, opposed the mechanistic rationalism of the enlightenment to the concept of organic development, arguing that "feminine energy" could remake society, including the "traditional family" as the embodiment of evil. Elizabeth Staunton took a radical stand in the realm of cultural feminism, abandoning religion and the ten commandments, believing that religion was invented to deny women's rights. She launched a campaign to disparage religion.

Matilda Karachi took a more unusual approach, criticizing Christianity and equating patriarchy with war, prostitution and the enslavement of women. According to Dorothy, Charlotte Kidman made a major contribution to feminist theory with her book

Material Feminism, in which she focused on the material lives of women. Charlotte Kidman criticized Spencer's sociological view, emphasizing that "women's economic attachment is not a natural process..." we are unique creatures in the world, and only our human sexual relationship can be an economic relationship. The sociocultural difference of family role is formed in the process of family production and labor, it should be placed in the historical development process of specific social relations to probe into the inequality and dependency.

Victoria Wood Hull was the first woman to ask the U.S. congress for women's rights. In the 19th century, narcissism was considered an extreme thing, and it wasn't until the 20th century that free love and sexual relationships were considered normal. Wood Hull insisted that the marriage be annulled because it was an official system of prostitution and rape. They thought this would mean the abolition of slavery and the monarchy. In 1872 Wood Hull became the first woman to run for President of the United States. In 1871 she called two international conferences, which were later disbanded by Karl Marx. She formed a new Communist Party. Cultural feminism also fought for the right to stream property. Emma Calderman was arrested in 1916 for advocating free abortion. Margaret Sanger argued that women must be given the right to legal abortions in order to improve their lives, and promoted Malthus's theory of controlling population growth. There was evidence in this regard that some feminists supported female homosexuality, showing the influence of individualism. There was a great deal of personal experience in the feminist works and their criticism of the family and family theory. The work of cultural feminism was full of attacks on the "orthodox sociology of the family," and many of the arguments were repackaged with new discourse as weapons of attack. These trends were revived in the 1980s and continued into the 1990s.

A new understanding of women's issues from a new perspective

American feminist scholars in the late 19th century and the 1970s had similar feminist. They look back on the past, look at the present, and list all kinds of facts about women's superiority. They focused on the medieval and Renaissance times when women played an important role. Emily Putnam was a model of this kind of research. She discussed the incredible times that women, as cultural heroines, have been ruled by power and oppression, from Greek western culture to Medieval chivalry, from feudal manor lords to 18th century. Putnam also discussed the life of women in slave plantations before the civil war, the original form of modern feminists and their oppressed contemporaries in 18th century England. According to Putnam, the former indicated the future, while the latter was an ominous reminder that women may fall victim to social hierarchy. This analysis warns the urgency of changing

women's situation and provides a new perspective for feminist research.

In addition, some feminist scholars who have discussed the content outside the history discipline, and some scientific authorities have been proved by new medical and biological research. Women were more tolerant of pain and disease than men. They lived longer and they were more resilient. So some feminists reasoned that, in fact, women were superior to men in many ways, just because men were stronger than women in physical strength, they became leaders and conquerors of the world. It also opened up a period for some feminist scholars to explain history with new feminist viewpoints. They argued that the first society was the matriarchal society, but because of men's irrational and innate desire for power and conquest, the patriarchal society finally came into being. Charlotte P. Gilman criticized women's negativity, but she also believed that patriarchal society was an era that produced a lot of evil, and the biggest evil was the war. Gilman said. "What we're looking at is the most basic male nature of the whole patriarchy, from its instinctive belligerence to the various forms of ostentation" "This anthropological study of male instinct was also a new way to understand and explain women's problems.

The main characteristics of postmodern feminism were the thorough construction of the bivariate thinking model of male and female, the firm rejection of the macro grand narrative, and the multi-element persistence of epistemology. Its ideological foundation came from the French postmodern feminist thinkers Foucault, Lotta and Derrida. Foucault believed that knowledge was combined with rights and that knowledge was the result of the interaction of rights discourse. Lotta believed that both science and literature were discourse activities that followed certain "rules of the game". The tradition of binary opposition in school was summed up as "logocentrism". It was believed that "logos" as the center of this tradition was not in its system or structure, but outside of its system. All of them were "central elimination", which was the whole western shape, but the classical system was changed into "non-central" or "non-central", and the primary and secondary and opposite relations in the sense of the median value of the original structured system can all be reversed. When exploring the causes of gender inequality, postmodern feminism pointed a sharp finger at the binary opposition of metaphysics, the core and essence of western culture, which was held in the United Nations educational, scientific and cultural organization on April 21, 2004. It was the cultural logic of binary opposition that determined the social reality of gender inequality, thus breaking the traditional gender pattern of male dominating female and female obeying male.

Other factors contributing to feminism in the United States

Impact of early feminism from other countries

The debate of feminism in the United States by foreign feminists also promoted the prosperity of feminism in the United States at the end of the 19th century. Cecily Hamilton, a British feminist, denounced the structure of marriage as an economic arrangement for women, because women had nothing to trade for but themselves. Oliver Shriiner of South Africa even distorted Darwin's emphasis that is only strong, self-sufficient as mothers can produce healthy children, so this race was destroying itself as middle-class women had nothing to do. She coined the term "sexual parasite" to describe the status of married women. At the same time, this budding feminist thought has been strengthened by those dramatic novels that explored the relationship between women and men. In the realistic novels of Susan Galesburg, niece Boyce and Charlotte P. Gilman, the ideas expressed in them all have distinct feminist nature. In Henrik Ibsen's play "Doll's House", the image of Nana, a woman who gradually woke up against traditional marriage, had strong repercussions in American and European audiences. Bernard Shaw's various plays about the conflict between women and men: men and women, St. John, Pygmalion and so on were also popular and discussed in the United States. Under the encouragement of various writers and scholars at home and abroad, feminists' thoughts were increasingly active.

Americans are more likely to change their traditional habits

The United States is a country with a tradition of immigration. During the colonial period, a large number of white Europeans who escaped from political persecution or sought for the "golden dream" came to the American continent, while the Puritans who pursued individualism, rational principles and the spirit of autonomy were the main immigrants. Under the influence of Puritanism, most American immigrants advocated freedom and happiness and personality liberation, including some educated middle-class white women. Although they were deeply influenced by the image of Victorian women, once they set foot on the land of America, their yearning for equality and freedom unconsciously changed in their hearts. And other immigrant women (mainly African women) have been working in factory just like men. It played an important role in production. So tradition had little effect on them for a long time. In short, if we open our eyes to the early history of immigration, we will not marvel at the radicalization of American feminism at the end of the 19th century. On the basis of the analysis and criticism of domestic and social labor, capitalism and patriarchy, culture and ideology, the feminist socialist theory of women's liberation has gradually deepened and matured in the struggle against capitalism and finally formed a relatively complete theoretical

system. These theories mainly include the following contents:

Women were still not free from oppression in modern capitalist societies. Feminist socialists have examined the situation of women in modern capitalist society, believing that women were still not free from oppression. The oppression of women was a kind of widespread and comprehensive oppression in the society. From the perspective of the scope of the main activities of women, they were still limited in the field of family and private life, and was seen as secondary and even on the edge of the field, women engaged in irrelevant narrow field of domestic law did not have a chance to earn higher income like men, as well as enjoying a high prestige in social public affairs. Although with the development of the market economy, women have had more employment opportunities, the situation in which most women regarded the family as their entire or basic sphere of activity has not fundamentally changed. Not only did they bear the double burden of family labor and social labor, some wife in the family even suffered from family abuse. The labour market was still at a disadvantage in place, and they were just entering a specific female labor market, focusing on some typical female professional post, such as nurses, elementary school teacher, secretary, assistant, etc.

On the causes of women's oppression, feminist socialists disagreed with the view that women's physical weakness and physical characteristics were the root causes of their oppression. The root cause of women's oppression was not physical, but social. From the aspects of economy, politics, culture, ideology and daily life, they made a holistic analysis of the causes of women's oppression, especially attaching more importance to the analysis of the economic causes of women's oppression, and regarding women's dependence on men in economic income as the key factor leading to their low social status. Thus, it was revealed that the important reason why women were oppressed lied in the fact that the value of their domestic work of reproducing labor force was not recognized. At the same time, it was believed that the patriarchy and capitalism, which have existed for a long time in human history, have become a powerful ideological force and penetrated into all fields of social life and people's minds, thus becoming a huge practical force to maintain the dominance of men over women. In particular, the education of masculinity and femininity which permeated the ideological field and was recognized by people, eliminated women's enterprising character and independence, weakened their self-consciousness, and made them consciously or unconsciously submissive and dependent on men.

The liberation of women by feminist socialists has many meanings, it is not a single but a comprehensive liberation of the whole country.

Generally speaking, it can be summarized as economic liberation, political liberation and ideological liberation. Economic liberation is mainly to free women from economic dependence on men, to free women from exploitation and oppression and to achieve economic independence. Political liberation is not only to obtain equal political rights in law and the implementation of these rights in real political life, but also to free women from the patriarchal power-dominated relationship implied in every field of society. The liberation of ideology and culture is to make the majority of women get rid of the patriarchy which has been binding and dominating their minds for a long time, thus making them realize their own ability and strength, and establish the sense of self-esteem, self-confidence and self-improvement.

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CONCLUSION

Fourier, the most enthusiastic advocate of women's liberation and sexual freedom, once said: "The development of a certain historical era can always be determined by the degree of women's freedom. The degree of women's liberation is the natural standard to measure the general liberation." That is to say, to a certain extent, the progress of women represents the progress of society. If a society develops in the direction of equality between men and women, it will show more civilization, norms and stability, and industrialization provides this condition for women. Therefore, we can see that industrialization has a great impact on women. Of course, we can also see from the Feminist Trend of thought in the United States at the end of the 19th century that the systematization of feminist thought is only preliminary without a complete theoretical system, and it has no independent research object and method.

Originally, it is isolated from the male world. Although it begins to pay attention to the difference of social roles between men and women and the deep-seated social reasons that lead to gender inequality, its defects and immaturity are also obvious. In addition, although the trend of thought is fierce, its main force is limited to middle-class women. The age group mainly focuses on the unmarried young women, excluding the majority of lower class women and older women from the ideological trend. It is doomed to decline in the later period. However, in the end of the 19th century, the United States formed its first feminist climax. When it absorbed and inherited the main western ideological trends, it also criticized and reformed them, abandoned the remnants of patriarchy and the prejudice and fallacy produced by the male centered. Feminism in this period, with its unique analytical perspective and critical edge, has become a new driving force in today's academic circles. It has also provided a theoretical basis for the lasting and in-depth development of feminism, especially for the rise of the second wave of feminism in the 1960s and 1970s in the United States.

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