

NEUTRALIZING THE TOXIC TYRANNY OF TODAY'S TITANS – A SOLUTION TO PATRIARCHAL POACHING

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Abstract

The title is the outcome of the brainstorming act of the article writer. The process of brainstorming act of the article writer begins with contemplating "... we make love as we never make love in life" of Helen Cixous and ends with penetrating "Men are afraid that women will laugh at them. Women are afraid that men will kill them" of Margaret Atwood. Postmodern feminism emerges as a fusion of postmodernist and feminist ideologies, emphasizing gender equality, subjectivity, and diverse discourses. It serves as a foundation for the fourth wave of feminism, challenging patriarchal norms and redefining gender identity beyond biological determinism. Key theorists like Julia Kristeva, Helene Cixous, and Luce Irigaray critique traditional gender roles, advocating for fluidity in identity and liberation from oppressive structures. This study explores postmodern feminism's influence on contemporary gender discourse, its resistance to societal and individual codes of conduct, and its philosophical alignment with Newton's first law of motion in opposing external forces that shape women's objectification.

Keywords: *postmodern feminism, gender equality, subjectivity, fourth-wave feminism, julia kristeva, helene cixous, luce irigaray, patriarchal norms, gender fluidity, feminist discourse, objectification, newton's first law of motion.*

Postmodern feminism is the amalgamation of postmodernism and feminism. It is a new branch of feminism that is embedded with gender equality and feminist norms. Postmodern feminism concentrates on subjectivity and cares multiple discourses. It is the starting point for the fourth wave of feminism. It is also the new and contemporary trend which has been practicing in the present. Helen Cixous, Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva are the most prominent practitioners of postmodern feminist and who are the helping figures for starting the fourth-wave postmodern feminism. First wave of feminism deals with political freedom of feminist Mind; second wave of feminism focuses on personal freedom of feminist Mind; third wave of feminism triggers biological freedom of feminist Mind; and fourth wave of feminism spread the fusion of fantasy and practicality with extended freedom of feminist Mind. Fifth wave of feminism may be expected that it may dissolve any kind of bodily identity in the soul conscious state of non-identical Mind.

The ideology of postmodernism does not contain a single or quotidian theme. But it comprises the multifarious aspects such as feminine identity in postmodern era,

fragmentation of conventional narration in language, liberation in sexuality, freedom in lesbianism, fluid in gender and the epistemic significance of social and political factors. Postmodern feminism tries to dilute the patriarchal norms and inequality in feminine gender. Julia Kristeva clearly points out how women were marginalized in western society and she stresses the significance of the maternal body and pre-oedipal concept in postmodern feminist studies. She took Jacques Lacan's views on oedipal and post-oedipal concepts. Kristeva also rejects the idea of female biology as 'feminine' and male biology as 'masculine' and she further states that the construction of the gender depends upon a person's own choice. Julia Kristeva excludes blatantly the male dominant groups such as racial and ethnic minorities, homosexuals and Jews.

Helen Cixous is a French-Algerian feminist and her literary works often focuses on women's relationship to language and literature. Her major works are: *Sorties*, *The Laugh of Medusa*, *Coming to Writing*, and *The School of Dreams*. Helen Cixous adopts various ideas of feminism in her literary works and launches what are the things that

they should do for themselves. Her essay *Sorties*, directly involved in rebellion against the myths of women and further she argues, “woman is always associated with postivity. Either a woman is passive or she does not exist, she continues. . . . What is left of her is unthinkable, unthought” (p.64). *The Laugh of Medusa* is another significant work which triggers women that they should dodge from the state of frightening, “woman be unafraid of any other place, of any same, or any other. My eyes, my tongue, my ears, my nose, my skin, my mouth, my body-for-(the)-other—not that I long for it in order to fill up a hole, to provide against some defect of mine, or because, as fate would have it, I’m spurred on by feminine “jealousy. . .” (p.890). This ideology clearly shows the breaking of tyranny from certain societal, cultural and patriarchal norms. Cixous’s terminology ‘*Ecriture Feminine*’ delineates the knowledge of speaking and writing of a woman who is inevitable that subverts the ideologies and norms of masculinity. Helen Cixous is clearly manifesting the relationship between two economies of two genders.

What is woman for man? . . . Imagine. . . a particular relationship between two economies: a masculine economy and a feminine economy, in which the masculine is governed by a rule that keeps time with two beats, three beat, four beats, with pipe and drum, exactly as it should be. An order that works by inculcation, by education; it’s always a question of education. An education that consists of trying to make a soldier of the feminine by force, the force history keeps reserved for woman, the ‘capital’ force that is effectively decapitation. Women have no choice other than to be decapitated, and in any case the moral is that if they don’t actually lose their heads by the sword, they only keep them on condition that they lose them –lose them, that is, to complete silence, turned into automations. (Cixous, 1981, p.43)

Postmodern theory is the most relevant mobilization for feminism. They want to be like the objects in the universe either remaining at rest or remaining in motion at a constant velocity unless acted on by a net external force. The net external force is determined by personal code of conduct (centripetal force) and social code of conduct (centrifugal force). Postmodern feminist mainly focused on breaking the tyranny of individual code of contact and

breaking the tyranny of social code of conduct. The objectification of women is caused by perverted disturbance of men as net external force on women’s appearance. Stalwarts of fourth wave of feminist movement rise their voice against objectification of women because they equate the virginity of freedom to the virginity of objects in the universe at rest continue to be at rest in the perception of first law of movement by Isaac Newton. The first law of motion not only deals with object at rest but also object in motion. The stand of the advocates of fourth wave of feminism is not to have any standards because they get influence neither by individual code of conduct nor by social code of conduct. They don’t want the code of conduct and they don’t follow individual code of conduct and social code of conduct.

Postmodern feminism is a critical approach that challenges traditional feminist perspectives by deconstructing established notions of gender, power, and identity. Emerging in the late 20th century, it draws from postmodernist and poststructuralist theories, emphasizing subjectivity, multiplicity, and the rejection of universal truths about women’s experiences. This movement has had a profound impact on world literature, shaping narratives, themes, and character representations in diverse ways. There are some major ideas: deconstruction of gender and identity which challenges the binary understanding of gender and highlights its fluidity and emphasizes that gender is a social construct influenced by cultural, historical, and linguistic factors; the code of universal feminism which deals with the rejection the notion that all women share the same experiences and struggles and it focuses on intersectionality, acknowledging race, class, sexuality, and ethnicity as crucial factors in feminist discourse; the multiplicity of narrative technique which encourages diverse and fragmented narratives that move beyond linear storytelling and also highlights subjectivity and personal perspectives rather than grand, overarching theories; and it interrogates about language and power structure which mainly influenced by thinkers like Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida, postmodern feminism examines how language shapes power dynamics and also interrogates the patriarchal discourse and how it constructs meaning.

Postmodern feminism has profoundly influenced world literature by redefining narratives, questioning gender constructs, and amplifying diverse voices. It challenges essentialist views of womanhood, emphasizing the multiplicity of female experiences. As Judith Butler argues, "gender is not something one is, it is something one does, an act... a 'doing' rather than a 'being'" (*Gender Trouble* 25). This perspective allows feminist literature to move beyond binary representations, instead exploring gender as a performative and fluid construct. By deconstructing traditional literary forms and themes, postmodern feminist literature creates space for alternative storytelling methods. Jeanette Winterson's *Written on the Body* (1992) defies conventional gender categorization by keeping the narrator's gender ambiguous, demonstrating how language and narrative structure can resist fixed identities. Similarly, Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) employs a fragmented, nonlinear narrative to critique patriarchal control over women's bodies and stories. As Atwood notes, "language is one of the key instruments of political control" (Atwood 57), reinforcing how literature functions as a site of resistance.

Postmodern feminism also amplifies voices that were historically marginalized. Postcolonial feminist writers, such as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Arundhati Roy, highlight the intersectionality of gender, race, and culture in their works. Adichie's *We Should All Be Feminists* (2014) argues that feminism must acknowledge diversity: "Culture does not make people. People make culture" (Adichie 38). This aligns with the postmodern feminist rejection of universal feminism, emphasizing the importance of localized, contextualized gender experiences. As literature continues to evolve, postmodern feminist thought remains a vital force in challenging existing norms and fostering new ways of understanding gender and identity. It disrupts traditional narratives, exposing power structures embedded in language and storytelling. Helene Cixous advocates for 'écriture féminine', stating that "woman must write herself: must write about women and bring women to writing" (Cixous 875). This call for self-representation ensures that literature remains a dynamic and evolving space for feminist discourse, continually reshaping how women's experiences are articulated in the global literary landscape.

Postmodern feminist literature provides space for varied and marginalized voices, moving beyond traditional, Eurocentric feminist narratives. By integrating race, class, and historical oppression into their works, postmodern feminist writers reflect the complexities of identity and power structures. Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987) exemplifies this by addressing the trauma of slavery and its lasting impact on Black women. The novel's fragmented narrative structure mirrors the psychological disintegration caused by oppression, illustrating what Morrison describes as the "unspeakable thoughts, unspoken" (Morrison 199). Similarly, Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997) critiques caste and gender discrimination in India, portraying how patriarchal and colonial histories shape individual experiences. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *We Should All Be Feminists* (2014) argues for a broader, intersectional approach to feminism, stating that "The problem with gender is that it prescribes how we should be rather than recognizing how we are" (Adichie 12). These works highlight the fluidity of identity and the necessity of considering multiple perspectives in feminist discourse.

Postmodern feminist writers often break conventional narrative structures, using metafiction, nonlinear storytelling, and fragmented perspectives to challenge dominant ideologies. Jeanette Winterson's *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* (1985) blends autobiography and fiction to explore lesbian identity and religious fundamentalism. The novel disrupts traditional bildungsroman conventions, presenting a nonlinear narrative that challenges fixed notions of selfhood. Similarly, Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) employs dystopian and metafictional techniques to critique gender oppression. The novel's shifting perspectives and unreliable narrator expose the constructed nature of history and power. Atwood asserts that "Every totalitarian regime is based on a huge lie, and part of that lie is control of the narrative" (Atwood 57). These experimental forms reflect the postmodern feminist belief that reality is not singular but composed of multiple, competing truths.

Postmodern feminist literature often rewrites myths, histories, and classical texts to offer alternative, subversive perspectives. These reinterpretations expose the patriarchal biases embedded in canonical literature. Angela Carter's *The Bloody Chamber* (1979) reimagines

traditional fairy tales, presenting female protagonists who resist victimization and reclaim their agency. By retelling *Bluebeard* from the perspective of an empowered heroine, Carter dismantles the trope of the passive female figure. Similarly, Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) revises Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, giving voice to Bertha Mason, the so-called "madwoman in the attic." Rhys deconstructs the colonial and gendered prejudices of the Victorian novel, illustrating the dehumanization of Creole women within imperial and patriarchal systems. These reinterpretations challenge dominant narratives, asserting that history and literature have long silenced women's perspectives.

Literature influenced by postmodern feminism questions authority, language, and dominant ideologies, asserting that traditional discourse has historically been male-centered. Helene Cixous' concept of 'écriture féminine' promotes a distinctly female mode of writing that resists phallogocentric structures. In *The Laugh of the Medusa*, Cixous declares, "Woman must write herself: must write about women and bring women to writing" (Cixous 875). This idea encourages experimental, nonlinear, and fluid forms of storytelling that break from patriarchal norms. Similarly, postcolonial feminists like Buchi Emecheta challenge Western feminist perspectives by highlighting indigenous and African women's struggles. In *The Joys of Motherhood* (1979), Emecheta critiques how colonialism and patriarchy shape Nigerian women's lives, emphasizing that feminism must consider cultural and economic disparities. Through these critical approaches, postmodern feminist literature continues to redefine global literary traditions, offering new frameworks for understanding gender, power, and identity.

Objective of the Paper

The objective of this paper is to critically analyze the evolution and significance of postmodern feminism as a distinct theoretical framework that integrates postmodernist thought with feminist ideology. This study aims to:

1. **Examine the Core Principles of Postmodern Feminism** – Investigate how postmodern feminism challenges traditional gender constructs, embraces subjectivity, and promotes multiple discourses in contrast to earlier feminist movements.

2. **Analyze the Contributions of Key Thinkers** – Explore the theoretical perspectives of prominent postmodern feminists such as Julia Kristeva, Helene Cixous, and Luce Irigaray, focusing on their critiques of patriarchal structures, language, and gender identity.
3. **Trace the Evolution of Feminist Waves** – Discuss the progression from the first to the fourth wave of feminism, highlighting how postmodern feminism has played a pivotal role in shaping contemporary feminist discourse.
4. **Investigate the Role of Language and Gender Identity** – Analyze how postmodern feminism deconstructs linguistic and cultural norms that define gender roles, emphasizing fluidity and individual choice over biological determinism.
5. **Address the Impact on Social and Political Structures** – Assess the influence of postmodern feminism on contemporary societal norms, particularly in relation to gender equality, sexuality, and the dismantling of patriarchal power dynamics.
6. **Establish a Philosophical Framework** – Draw parallels between postmodern feminism and Newton's first law of motion, illustrating how feminists resist external social and cultural forces that seek to objectify and confine women within traditional roles.
7. **Speculate on the Future of Feminism** – Offer insights into the potential trajectory of feminist thought, including the possibilities of a fifth wave that transcends bodily identity and embraces a state of non-identical, soul-conscious existence.

This paper seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of postmodern feminism's role in contemporary discourse, demonstrating its relevance in challenging oppressive structures and advocating for a more inclusive, fluid, and liberated conception of gender and identity.

Conclusion

Postmodern feminism represents a significant shift in feminist thought, challenging traditional gender norms, deconstructing patriarchal ideologies, and embracing subjectivity and fluidity in identity. The contributions of theorists such as Julia Kristeva, Helene Cixous, and Luce

Irigaray highlight the movement's emphasis on linguistic, psychological, and cultural transformations that redefine the feminine experience. The fourth wave of feminism, deeply influenced by postmodernist ideals, resists both individual and societal constraints, advocating for total liberation from predefined gender roles. By drawing parallels with Newton's first law of motion, postmodern feminism asserts that external forces, such as social expectations and objectification, must be resisted to maintain autonomy and self-definition. As feminist discourse evolves, future waves may further dissolve rigid identities, moving toward a more inclusive and dynamic understanding of gender and freedom.

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