



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

ECSO4001

Understanding Society

Feminism

2023

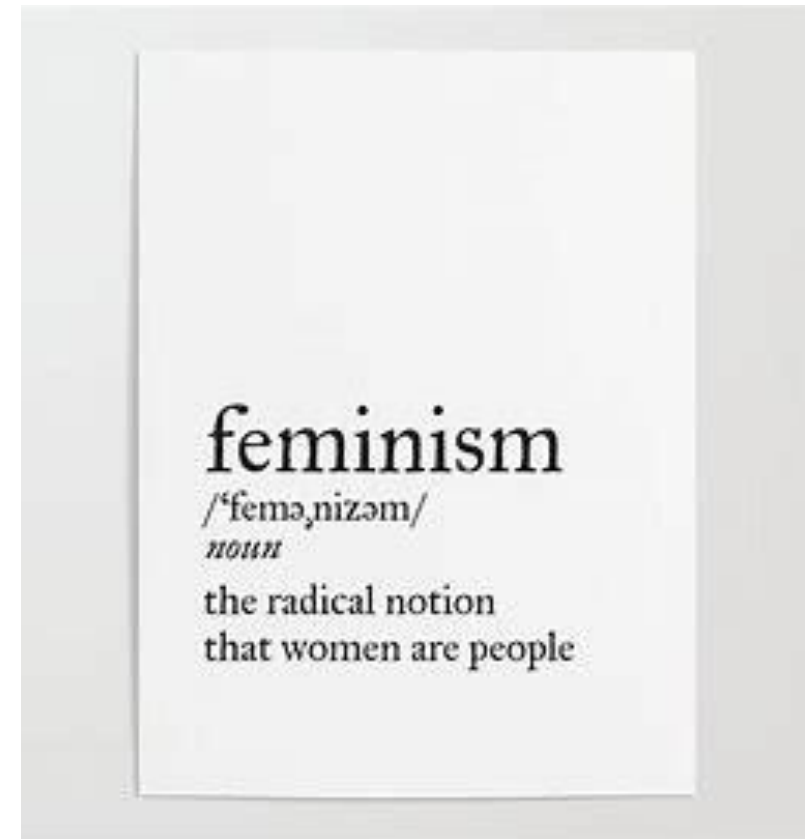
Trawsnewid Addysg; Trawsnewid Bywydau
Transforming Education; Transforming Lives



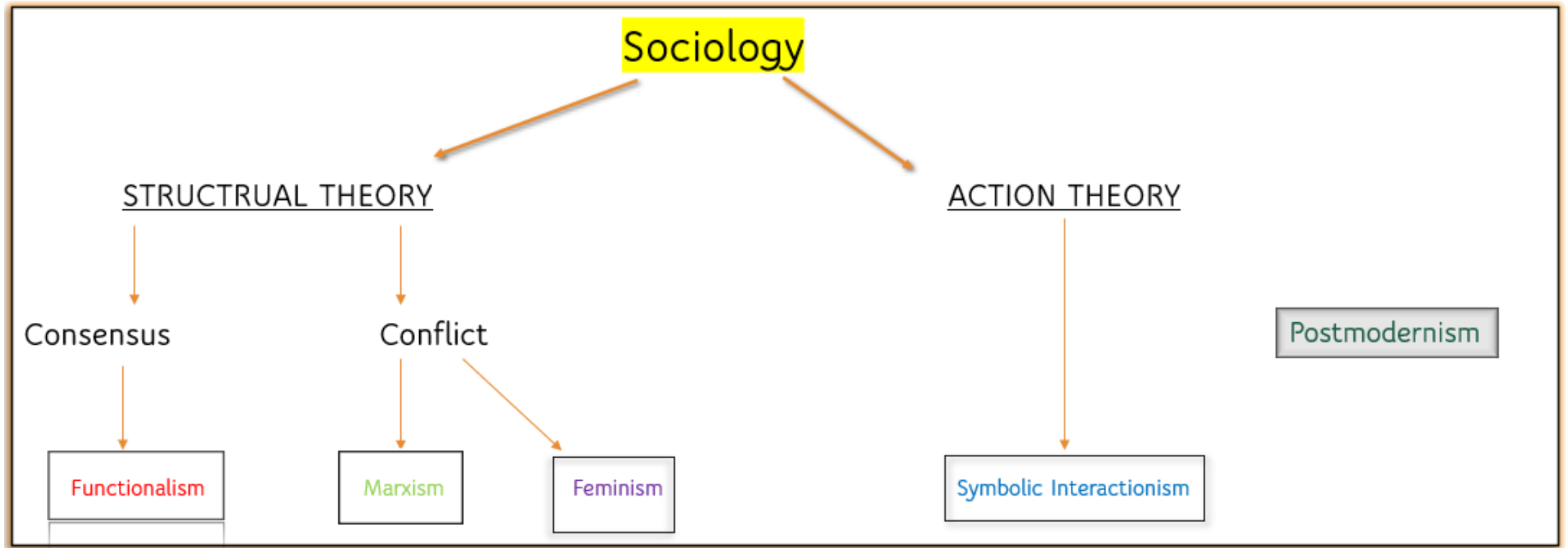
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Definitions...

- “Simply put, feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation and oppression” (hooks, 2000, p.1)
- “Feminism as a social, political, economic, and intellectual movement has been defined variously over the past 200 years. The current consensus is that there is no one feminism, but in fact, many traditions within a larger movement dedicated to securing equity for women” (Boles and Long Hoeveler, 2004, p. 1).



Sociological Perspectives



Feminist Theory

- It is a conflict theory
- It challenges the 'malestream' of sociology
- Seeks to understand the subordination of women
- It is political and seeks to makes changes to society



"A feminist sociology is one that is for women and not just or about women and one that challenges and confronts the male supremacy which institutionalises women's inequality"

(Abbott and Wallace, 2006, p.13)

History

Timeline of important historical facts.

1st Event

1961

Introduction of the
Contraceptive pill
(Married Women
until 1967)

2nd Event

1964

Married Women's
property Act
Revision
(introduced in 1970)

3rd Event

1967

Abortion Act

4th Event

1968

Ford Machinists'
Strike, Dagenham
(Equal pay)

5th Event

1970

National WLM
Conference

6th Event

1971

Chiswick Women's
Refuge Opened

History

Timeline of important historical facts.

7th Event

1975

Sex Discrimination
Act

8th Event

1975

Employment
Protection Act

9th Event

1976

Domestic Violence
and Matrimonial
Proceedings Act

10th Event

1979

Southall Black
Sisters Formed

11th Event

1979

Margaret Thatcher
becomes first
women Prime
Minister

12th Event

1987

Dianne Abbott
First Black Women
to be Elected to
House of Commons

Married Women's Property Act 1964

- Introduced in 1870
- Allowed women to be legal owners of money earned
- Inherit property
- Money earned by employment or any property owned was no longer her husbands property
- Financial stability

National WLM Conference

- 600 women attended the first national conference to debate a wide variety of issues affecting women. These included:
- Equal Pay
- Equal Educational and Job Opportunities
- Free Contraception and Abortion on demand
- Free 24- hour nurseries

Chiswick Women's Refuge

- Opened in Chiswick in 1971 by Erin Pizzey
- Provided Protection for Women who were abused by their Husbands
- Women could also bring their Children to the Refuge with them.
- Introduction of Women Aid in 1974

1975 Sex Discrimination Act

- Elimination of discrimination on the grounds of marriage
- Promoting Equality of opportunity between men and women

Employment Protection Act 1975, in relation to women..

- Statutory Maternity Pay a requirement for employers
- Legislated against dismissal on the grounds of pregnancy



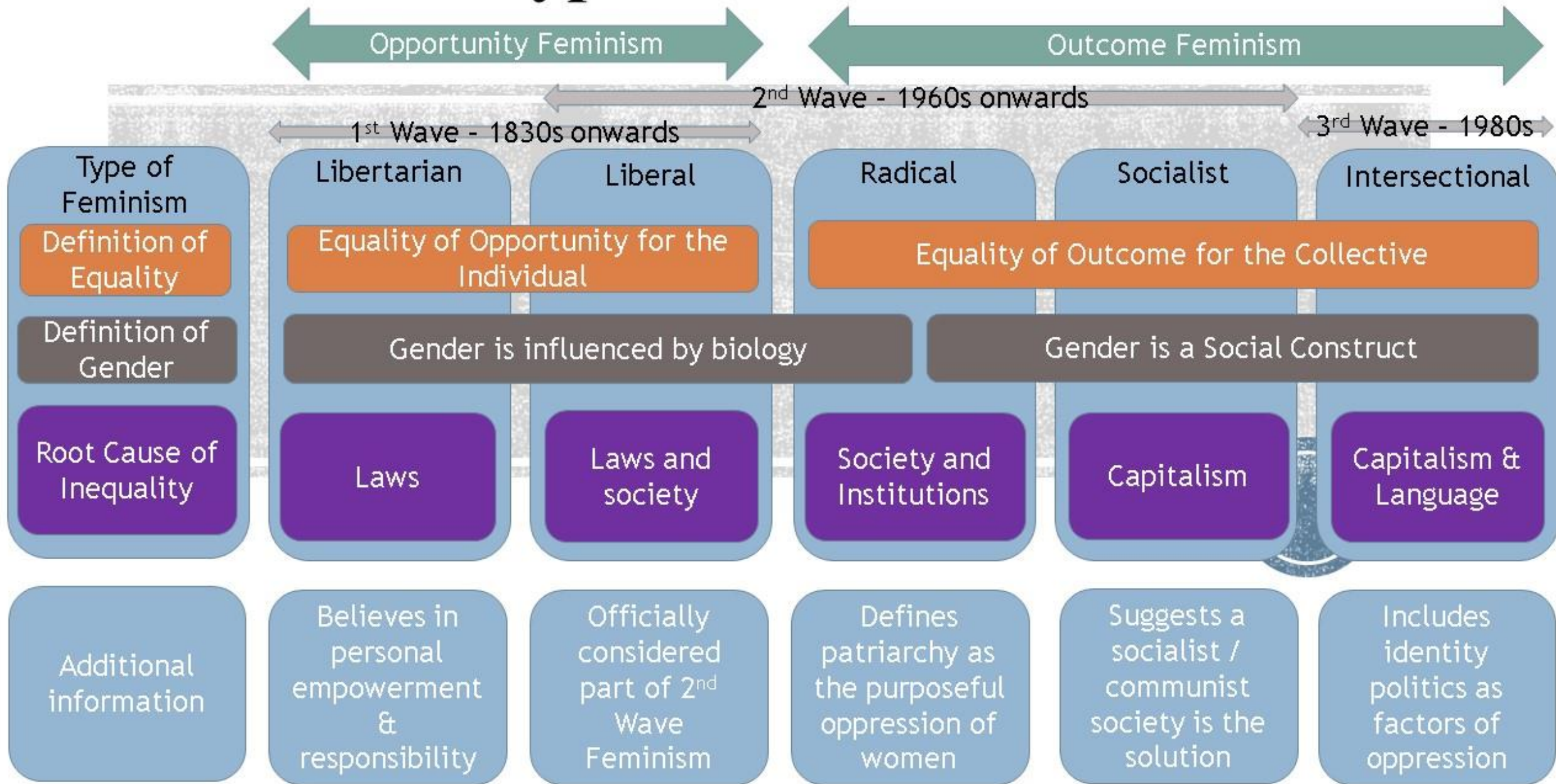
The waves of feminism

Cymru
Yr Eiddo
Wales

Trawsnewid Addysg; Trawsnewid Bywydau
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Types of Feminism

Egalitarian Feminism
<http://egafeminist.blogspot.co.uk>
 V2.0



(Some) Types of feminism



- Liberal
- Marxist
- Radical
- Socialist
- Cultural
- Postmodern
- Black
- Intersectional

First wave of feminism (19th and early 20th century)



- Mary Wollstonecraft's 'A Vindication of the Rights of Woman' (1792)
- Right to vote
- Didn't differentiate between sex and gender
- Class based
- The Suffragists and the Suffragettes
- The Pankhurst family, Millicent Fawcett
- Fern Riddell's "Death in Ten Minutes" (2018)

Second wave of feminism (1960s – 1980s)

- Late 1960s
- Part of other civil rights movements
- UK: interested in class
- US: legal rights
- Consent, body autonomy, pay rights
- Different branches of feminism started
- Simone De Beauvoir, Gloria Steinem, Sheila Rowbotham, Silvia Federici, Audre Lorde, Hazel V. Carby



Third wave feminism (early 1990s)

- Came after a backlash in the 1980s – conservative governments focused on the traditional roles of women
- Challenged post feminism – a feeling that feminism was 'done'
- Culture important (e.g., Riot Grrrl / Spice Girls)
- Start of feminist internet (blogging, globalization)
- Attitudes needed changing, not just laws
- Angela McRobbie, Rosalind Gill: both look at this period



Fourth wave of feminism (2012)

- Digital feminism
- #MeToo movement
- Times Up
- #HeforShe movement
- Womens marches
- Everyday Sexism movement



Fifth wave feminism (now?)

- Difficult to define
- We're living it!
- Global feminism through social media
- Fighting against the challenges to women's rights
- Challenges the gender binary
- More intersectional
- Alison Phipps '#MeWithoutYou' (2020)





Branches of Feminism

Cymru
Yr Eiddo
Wales

Trawsnewid Addysg; Trawsnewid Bywydau
Transforming Education; Transforming Lives

Liberal Feminism

- Sometimes called mainstream feminism or individualistic feminism
- Based on the political ideas of liberalism
 - That humans are rational, autonomous individual
 - Maximise one's self-interest
 - Each of us ought to be free to pursue our own version of the good life
- Believes once society is reformed there will be equal opportunities
- Believes women should have the same rights as men
- Rights in the law

(Boles and Long Hoeveler, 2004)

Liberalism

- It's been heavily criticised
- Accused of "biological essentialism" (Madsen, 2000, p. 36)
- Doesn't challenge capitalism
- Neglects the domestic life of women
- Lacks class or race analysis
- Seeks to reform the patriarchy, not make structural changes
- Become part of the system not change it

(Madsen, 2000)

Radical feminism

"Radical feminism is called 'radical' because it is struggling to bring about really fundamental changes in our society. We, in this segment of the movement believe that the pie itself is rotten"

(Kreps, 1968 cited in Rhodes, 2005, p. 29)

Radical Feminism

- Stems from womens movement of the 1960s
- Woman are oppressed because they are women
- Gender is a system of male dominance
- Emphasised "the importance of personal feelings, experiences and relationships" (Boles and Long Hoeveler, 2004, p. 270)
- Consciousness raising: women collectively sharing their experiences
- Focused on reproductive freedoms
- Focused on sex work and pornography: see it as exploitation and methods of oppression
- Women's emancipation comes from control over their sexuality



Marxist Feminism

- Considers the role women have in upholding capitalism
- Especially through domestic labour and reproductive labour
- Connects gender status quo to productions methods
- Physical and social reproduction in the home supports/upholds male political and economic domination (i.e., the patriarchy)
- Known for Silvia Federici's "Wages for Housework" campaign
- Betty Friedan's "The Feminine Mystique"
- Angela Davis' "Women, Race and Class"



The Sociology of Housework – Ann Oakley (1974)

- Significant in challenging 'malestream' sociology and feminist sociology
- Oakley argued that housework was real job, rather than being 'natural' for a wife a mother
- Found women were:
 - Dissatisfied with housework
 - Found it monotonous
 - Low prestige (i.e., 'just' a housewife)
 - Women work long hours
 - 'Housewife' is a construction of feminine identity
 - Class made no difference to attitudes to housework, but it did to attitudes toward the housewife role
 - This challenged the assumption that only middle-class wives were unhappy.

Socialist Feminism

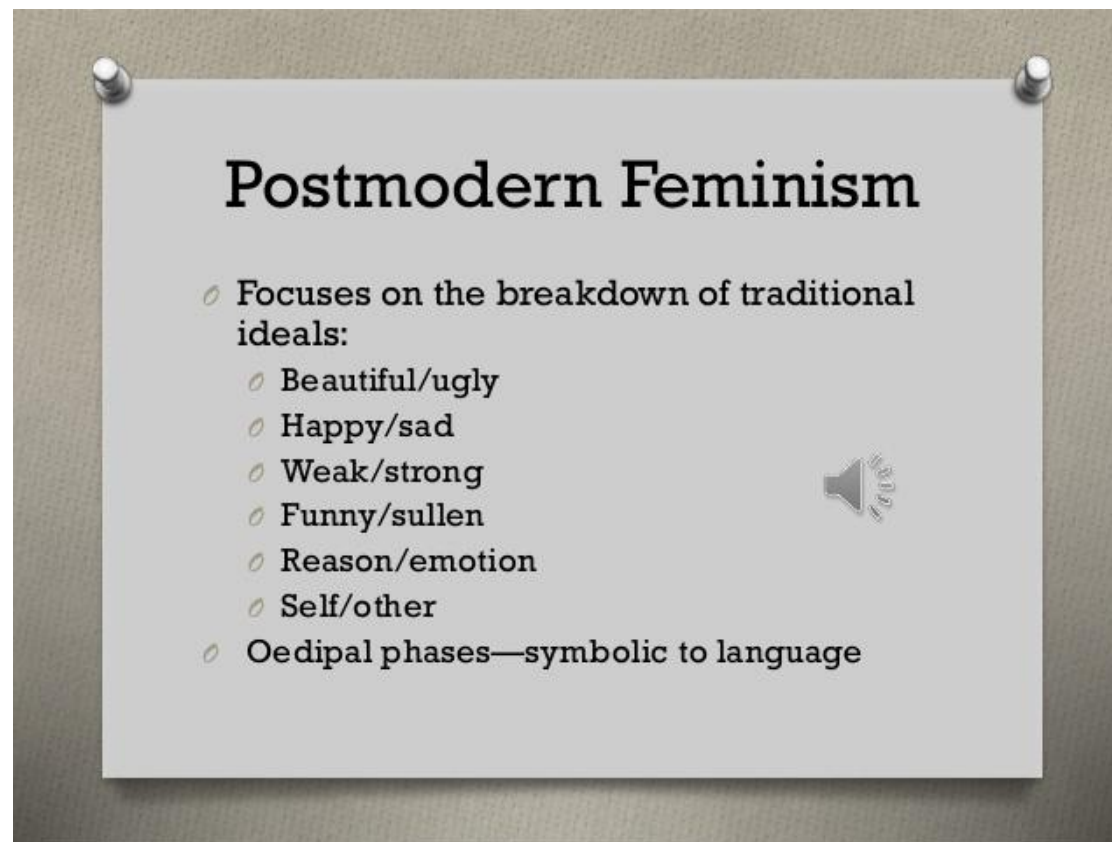
- Combines radical feminism and Marxist feminism
- Believes women are oppressed due to classism and sexism
- Believes that capitalism and the patriarchy are connected

Cultural Feminism

- Celebrates the differences between men and women
- Women's attributes are privileged over men's
- Non-political and focuses on cultural change (e.g., attitudes)
- Argues "women's superior nurturing and pacific values can transform society" (Boles and Long Hoeveler, 2013, p. 91)
- Alice Echols (1989): Cultural feminism wants to reverse (not eliminate) the ways men and women are valued (Saulnier, 2013)
- "Cultural feminists have not challenged the defining of women, but only that definition given by men" (Alcoff, 2006 p. 134)

Postmodern

- Rejects the idea one theory can explain women's position
- Accepts each viewpoint as valid
- Argues that "groups of women and individual women change constantly and are therefore impossible to pin down to some essence or core" (Haralambos and Holborn, 2013, p. 122)
- Wants to deconstruct male language and way of seeing the world
- Challenge the concept the male is associated with "normal" and females are a deviation from that norm



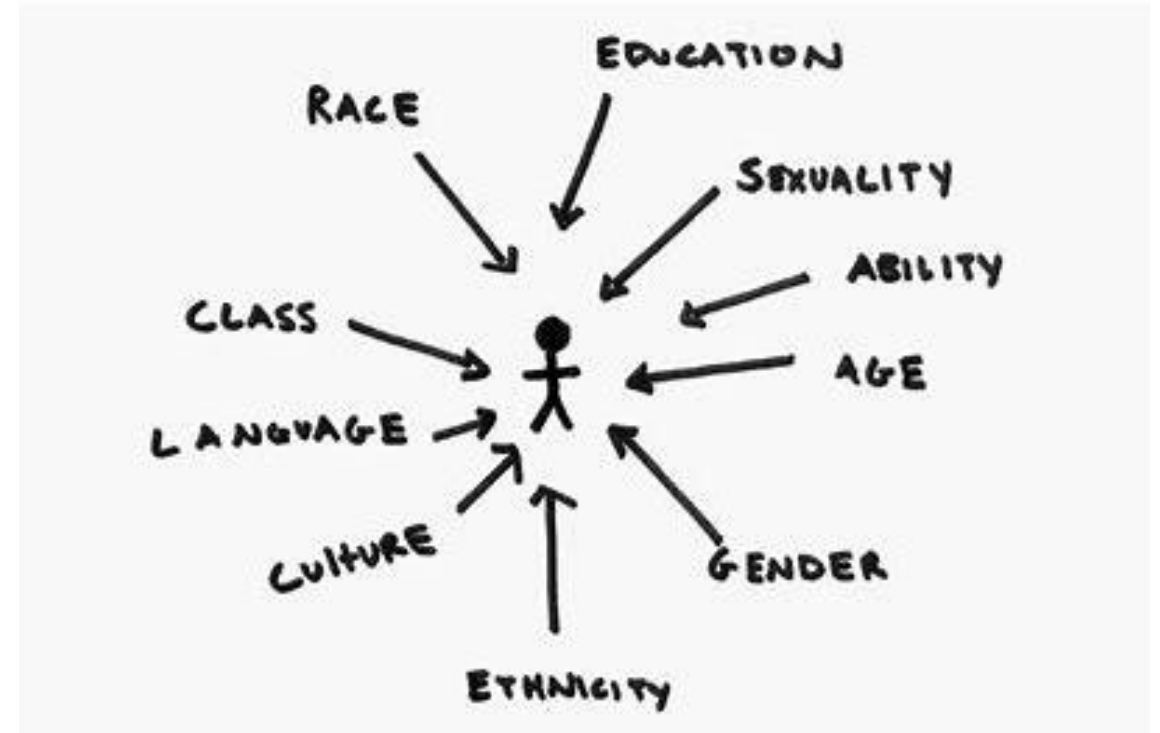
Black Feminism

- Critiques mainstream feminism for being exclusionary
- Looks at the combined effects of gender, race and class oppression
- Race, class and gender oppression are all features of white supremacy, capitalism and patriarchy
- Focuses on self-affirmation and creating black institutions and communities
- Ida B. Wells, Audre Lorde, bell hooks, Patricia Hill Collins,
- Womanist theory (Alice Walker):
 - Culture and femininity are equally important (Blackness is the lens through which to understand femininity)
 - Womanism should be separated from feminism

**“Womanist is
to feminist
as purple is
to lavender.”
~ Alice Walker**

Intersectional Feminism

- Addresses lack of race analysis in traditional feminism
- Developed by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989)
- Comes from Critical Race Theory
- Recognises the multiple ways women can be oppressed (specifically Black women)
- The inequalities Black women face are not singular identity issues and their needs have often been overlooked by social justice causes, such as 'race' equality and feminism (Hill Collins and Bilge, 2016)



Critiques of feminism

- Feminism has traditionally been white and middle class
- Women's March 2016
- #MeToo: role of women of colour overlooked
- '#Me without You' by Alison Phipps





Applying Feminist theory to society: Gender

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Sex & Gender

Sex denotes biological sex determination by measurable organs, hormones and chromosomes

Gender Denotes roles, activities, behaviours and expectations within society

Sex is an individual trait e.g. Male, Female, Intersex etc.

Gender is a social construct e.g. What's Masculine or Feminine

Gender Socialisation: gender is a social construct

- “One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman” – Simone Du Beauvoir (1949)
- “The child’s home is full of gender signals” (Oakley, 2005, p. 37)
- Ann Oakley (2005 [1974]) put forward how modern society shapes gender roles and behaviours:
 - Manipulation: e.g., mum’s paying more attention to girls’ hair and dressing them in ‘girls’ clothes
 - Canalisation: directing boys and girls to certain objects, e.g., ‘boys’ toys and ‘girls’ toys’
 - Verbal appellations: ‘you’re a good girl’ / ‘you’re a naughty boy’
 - Different activities: girls encouraged in domestic activities

(Haralambos and Halborn, 2013, p. 101)

Gendering

- How society influences gender roles (Bradley, 2013)
- Gendering looks at how the environment reproduces or challenges gender differences



(Bradley, 2013)



HM Government



CORONAVIRUS

STAY HOME. SAVE LIVES.



The new COVID-19 variant is spreading fast.
Every action counts.

STAY HOME › PROTECT THE NHS › SAVE LIVES



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