Dear students,
Due to the pandemic, Covid 19, the whole world is under threat and has to fight against it, so we all have to join hands to overcome the crisis. But we don’t have to break our flow of knowledge through any means if we are not in the condition to meet in person in the classroom.

We talked a lot in classroom and now it’s time to have some chat on online materials. Since our paper centres, and as the title of the paper suggests, around the position of women in a patriarchal society, we talked at a greater length, had a detailed discussion over the texts and critical essays prescribed in our course.

As we know, that now we have to talk on the third unit which focuses on Women and Education, harassment of women at work places and Labour force restructuring; we need to have some talk on these subjects. We all know that no academic discussion over women, gender and sexuality will ever be complete if we drop four major feminists and their ground-breaking works. These feminists and their writings are:
1. Virginia Woolf: *A Room of One’s Own and three Guinees*
2. Simone de Beauvoir: *The Second Sex*
3. Kate Millett: *Sexual Politics*, and
4. Elaine Showalter: *A Literature of Their Own*

So, I would like to share with you four chapters of my work devoted to said critics and their work which was published from Authorhouse, United Kingdom in 2012.

I request you all to please go thoroughly through the four pdf files I am sending to upload on the University website which will not only turn out to be a great asset for you on the paper, but also will enrich your insight on women’s studies.

I also invite you and welcome you all for your queries related to the shared pdf files and your paper, “Gender, Sexuality and Social Change”, and assure that I will be available for you round the clock, 24x7. You all please feel free to contact me through whatsapp, email and phone. Do keep in touch. The details of which are as follows:
Mobile: 9407343432
Email: vipinsingh@cusb.ac.in
Whatsapp Group: Gender, Sexuality and Social Change (On which you all are available)
STAY HOME. STAY SAFE.

Good Luck.

Dr Vipin K Singh
Associate Professor
Department of English
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Katherine Murray Millett, basically a sculptor, has earned a big name for her even in the field of feminism. As in the case of Woolf and Beauvoir, in Millett's life also several events can be noticed to play a major and vital role in shaping her sensibility as a pro-woman intellectual. She was born on 14th September, 1934 in St. Paul Minnesota, United States and since then several forces acted upon her in becoming "an angry young woman with a message."¹

Biographical Factors

Millett was born in an Irish Catholic family and was the second of the three daughters of her parents. Unlike Woolf and Beauvoir, Millett does not bear a great influence of her father Jim Millett on her. Beauvoir and Woolf both had a very supportive father and both of them were greatly influenced by their fathers since their childhood. It was not so with Millett, her father Jim Millett, who was a contractor, had abandoned his family when Kate was just fourteen years old. The first peep into the male world, for any girl, is through her father and Millett's first experience, unlike her predecessors, was a negative one. Talking about her father in her memoir she writes: "my father left us and became only the handsome stranger of his youth."²

One more thing which could have left a deep impression on young Kate's mind was the reason of his father's abandonment of his family. Later in her memoir A.D. she has exposed the reason behind the act. She writes, he left his three daughters "because, by marrying again he could try once more to father a son? Three attempts with Mother produced only three girls. . . ."³

One of the major influences Kate had on her was of her mother. She saw her mother supporting the family at first by demonstrating potato peelers, when her husband left them. Millett about her mother writes: "It is Mother who keeps the peace, Mother who is our cement, our entity, integrity and essence."⁴ As her father abandoned them suddenly her mother got the responsibility and had to work to support her family which she was not allowed to do earlier. Millett writes about it in her memoir: ". . .as Jim Millett's wife she cannot earn a penny nor advance her cause or her family's

³ Ibid., p. 211.
⁴ Ibid., p. 183.
cause at all". All these things had a direct or indirect influence upon her young female mind.

The other lady who played a very important role in Kate's life was her father's sister Dorothy whom she called the "first great love of her life". She was a divorced single lady whom the three Millett sisters called A.D. She was a rich lady and the Millett sisters were highly impressed by her. It was she who had sent Kate to study at Oxford. She insisted Kate to come out of lesbianism. And Kate was very much concerned with her aunt's reactions on her writings and activities. Talking about her aunt's position in comparison to her mother, in her memoir, Kate writes: "But the heart cries out for the other, the second mother, the influence so strong in childhood it could efface our own mother's".

One very important aspect of Millett's life was her turn towards lesbianism. She developed and possessed this tendency since her high school years. She has written about her experience and exploration into this new world as:

. . . Jaycee brought me out, birthed me into sisterhood, the route through her knees my canal into another life. From that moment on, I was transformed. I had crossed the line into the taboo. . . But a happiness almost to madness, to passing out. Orgasm. The mystery. I had invented and discovered it. The adventure of being in love. Secret, undiscovered, forbidden love.

In her early or childhood years she was very less in touch with the male community. She largely had female influences in her life. As she tells: "For our childhood had had two figures, two great women for its poles, Mother and Aunt Dorothy".

She came close to and then married a fellow sculptor Fumio Yoshimura in 1965. But they could not carry their relation for long. She became an active member of feminist struggle in the late 1960s and 70s and was also committee member of National Organization for women, all this

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5 Ibid., p. 33.
6 Ibid., p. 8
7 Ibid., pp. 41-42.
8 Ibid., pp. 25-26.
9 Ibid., p. 129.
resulted in their split-up. Ultimately they got divorced in 1985 and she devoted herself completely to the feminist struggle.

Kate Millett's pro-woman or feminist sensibility started evolving at an early age from her family experiences. The incidents taking place around her within her house had compelled her to become a staunch feminist. The outside world was also filled with the ideas of female upliftment and the fight for equality. All these were responsible for the creation of her sensational treatise *Sexual Politics*, which is the storehouse of her feminist ideologies and on which the next section will throw light in detail.

**Evolution of Thought**

Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics* is again a paradigm of women's marginalization. Her work is not that elaborate as *Beauvoir's The Second Sex*, but she has touched almost every aspect related to women, briefly and with a theoretical edge. She has passed through almost every domain: political, ideological, psychological, religious, anthropological, historical and literary; to show the secondary status of women. In her *Sexual Politics*, she has laid bare the politics working against one sex, benefiting the other. In fact, this work is Millett's doctoral dissertation which she completed in 1969 and in the same year it came in print and became the bestseller. The book under discussion appeared when the second wave feminist movement was at full swing. It was the 50th anniversary of the suffrage and the book fanned the flames of the movement. And Millett, acquainted with the events, fashioned the book accordingly.

Despite her denial of any debt of manner and matter from Simone de Beauvoir, Kate Millett has explicitly used in *Sexual Politics* Beauvoir's techniques of form and style at some places. How and what devices she brought into use will be accounted for in the later sections of the chapter. But, being a research work of "a committed feminist"¹⁰ for her doctoral thesis, the present work appears more complicated and turns out to be a staunch feminist treatise on polemical and theoretical grounds. In the work under consideration, the thought does not evolve as it does in *A Room of One's Own* and *The Second Sex*. Unlike her predecessors, Virginia Woolf and Simone de Beauvoir, Kate Millett seems to have become very theoretical in her approach from the very beginning and shows no pretence to hide her wrath against the social and cultural mechanisms that work against and contribute to the subordination of the weaker sex: "It happened

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¹⁰ Kate Millett, "Introduction to Touchstone Paperback", *Sexual Politics*, p. xvi.
because I got fired". Lynne Pearce is of the opinion that the work helped a lot to set pace in the wheels of feminist movement:

... *Sexual Politics* was the text that re-launched the modern Women's Movement in both its popular and academic manifestations. It was a manifesto for revolution whose challenge to patriarchy is implicit in all subsequent feminist writings.\(^\text{12}\)

The book is divided into three sections: "Sexual Politics", "Historical Background" and “The Literary Reflection”. The first section is further divided into two chapters: "Instances of Sexual Politics" and "Theory of Sexual Politics". In the first chapter Millett has attempted to display "the role which concepts of power and domination play in some contemporary literary descriptions of sexual activity itself".\(^\text{13}\) Taking excerpts from Henry Miller's *Sexus* and Norman Mailer's *An American Dream* of heterosexual love and then juxtaposing it with examples from Jean Genet's *The Thief's Journal* of homosexual love, Millett has portrayed how this concept of power and domination works in sexual activity, supporting one while subjugating the other. In Miller's excerpt, the one which she has chosen, the choice of words, the inherent tone and the activity and passivity in sexual intercourse, all indicate towards the concept of domination and subordination. Ida, the heroine, is totally passive doing exactly what she is ordered to. Val, who is a friend of Ida's husband is giving orders and taking all the initiatives. It is the activity and passivity, domination and subjugation in the sexual activity which Kate has tried to highlight. As she says:

As an account of sexual passage, the excerpt has much in it of note beyond that merely biological activity which the narrator would call "fucking". Indeed it is just this other content which gives the representation of the incidents, its value and character.\(^\text{14}\)

Millett notices that the passage seems to have been written for a male reader and comprises twofold purpose. First, circumstances, details and contexts are

\(^{11}\) Ibid., p. xv.


\(^{13}\) Kate Millett, "Preface", *Sexual Politics*, p. ix.

\(^{14}\) Ibid., "Instances of Sexual Politics", p. 4.
speculated to evoke the excitations of sexual intercourse; and secondly, it also seems to be a male domination over female. Millett writes:

For the passage is not only a vivacious and imaginative use of circumstance, detail and context to evoke the excitation of sexual intercourse, it is also a male assertion of dominance over a weak, compliant and rather unintelligent female. It is a case of sexual politics at the fundamental level of copulation.15

Millett appears to locate how a male sexual organ empowers a man and how a female sexual organ becomes a means of humiliation for her. She describes how through physical intercourse and a series of physical and emotional gestures of contempt a man tries to hold his privileged position and power and suppresses a woman. On being asked whether he loves Ida, Val replies with studied insolence: "I like this', said I, giving her a stiff job". Millett states that "His penis is now an instrument of chastisement, whereas Ida's genitalia are but the means of her humiliation."16 Through Ida's physical, mental and emotional harassment by her lover and the husband, Millett draws out the conclusion of Miller's intention. Millett writes:

Miller's educational intentions in the passage are abundantly clear. Females who are frigid, e.g., not sexually compliant, should be beaten. Females who break the laws of marital fidelity should also be beaten, for the barter system of marriage must not be violated by outside commerce.17

Kate Millett cites second literary example from Norman Mailer's *An American Dream* which describes a heterosexual sodomy. Mailer's hero, Stephen Rojack has just committed the murder of his wife and is now relieving feelings by buggering his mind. Rojack appears to have little motive for the killing beyond the fact that he is incapable of mastering his wife by any means short of murder. Mrs. Rojack who knows about the extra-marital affairs of her husband, brings in his notice that since their separation, she has also indulged herself in same type of affairs and confesses that she has been enjoying this very activity with her new lovers. That his wife commits sodomous adultery becomes intolerable for Mr. Rojack and he

15 Ibid., p. 6.
16 Ibid., p. 7.
17 Ibid., p. 9.
could not hold patience: "It is a final blow to his vanity, his sense of
property, and . . . his fancied masculine birth right of super ordination, so he
promptly retaliates by strangling the upstart".\textsuperscript{18} Now he commits a sodomous
adultery with Ruta, a Nazi girl, who responds as "masculine fantasy
dictates": ". . . she was becoming mine as no woman ever had, she wanted to
be part of my will."\textsuperscript{19} So, Rojack enjoys his life and becomes "one of the
first literary characters to get away with murder; he is surely the first hero as
homicide to rejoice in his crime and never really lose his creator's support."\textsuperscript{20}
Mailer's \textit{An American Dream}, therefore, is, concludes Millett, "a rallying cry
for a sexual politics in which diplomacy has failed and war is the last
political resort of a ruling caste that feels its position in deadly peril."\textsuperscript{21}

Kate Millett quotes third and the last literary example from Jean
Genet's autobiographical novel \textit{The Thief's Journal}. Millett remarks that \textit{The
Thief's Journal} is the first literary treatise where the author's identification is
with the female character. Jean Genet is both male and female. She reflects
that sexual role does not have any substantial value in "biological identity
but of class or caste in the hierocratic homosexual society projected in
Genet's novels".\textsuperscript{22} She also studies Genet's play \textit{The Balcony} which
demonstrates the futility of revolution which "preserves intact the basic unit
of exploitation and oppression, that between the sexes, male or female, or
any of the substitutes for them".\textsuperscript{23} She finds Genet explores throughout \textit{The
Balcony} the pathology of virility, the chimera of sexual congress as a
paradigm of power over other human being. Genet seems to have, according
to Millett, forwarded the idea that it is basically impossible to change society
without changing personality; so, the sexual personality should undergo a
drastic metamorphosis. To liberate ourselves, Genet gives the impression,
we will have to break the chains of our own social norms and taboos. There
are three cages in which mankind is imprisoned and that must be shattered.
The first is the potential power of great figures - cleric, the judge and the
warrior- which have enslaved human consciousness. The second is the force
of police state, the only visual power in a corrupt society. The last is the cage
of sex, "the cage in which all others is enclosed: for is not the totem of Police
Chief George a six foot rubber phallus, a "prick of great stature?"\textsuperscript{24} Millett
reflects, Genet is of the view that unless the Police Chief is permanently
imprisoned in his tomb and unless the new rebels have truly forsworn
customary idiocy of the old sexual politics, there will be no revolution:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{18} Ibid., p. 10.
  \item \textsuperscript{19} Norman Mailer, \textit{An American Dream} (New York: Dials, 1964), p. 45.
  \item \textsuperscript{20} Kate Millett, "Instances of Sexual Politics", \textit{Sexual Politics}, p. 15.
  \item \textsuperscript{21} Ibid., p. 16.
  \item \textsuperscript{22} Ibid., p. 17.
  \item \textsuperscript{23} Ibid., p. 20.
  \item \textsuperscript{24} Ibid., p. 22.
\end{itemize}
Sex is deep at the heart of our troubles, Genet is urging, and unless we eliminate the most pernicious of our systems of oppression, unless we go to the very centre of the sexual politics and its sick delirium of power and violence, all our efforts at liberation will only land us again in the same primordial stews.²⁵

In the Second Chapter of the First Part, "Theory of Sexual Politics", Millett argues the very initial problem regarding the introduction of the term "sexual politics. The first question in this reference that raises its head is: "Can the relationship between the sexes be viewed in the political light at all?" The answer of the question, states Millett, "depends on how one defines politics".²⁶ In this chapter, Millett denies to define the political in terms of narrow and exclusive world of meetings, chairmen and parties. She appears to conceive "politics" in terms of power-structured relationships and arrangements that supports one group of persons to control the other. She accounts for that an ideal politics may be viewed as the arrangement of human life on agreeable and rational principles by the virtue of which the entire notion of power over others should be eradicated. Millett writes:

The term "politics" shall refer to power-structured relationships, arrangements whereby one group of persons is controlled by another. By way of parenthesis one might add that although an ideal politics might simply be conceived of as the arrangement of human life on agreeable and rational principles from whence the entire notion of power over others should be banished, one must confess that this is not what constitutes the political as we know it, and it is to this that we must address ourselves.²⁷

Kate Millett argues that in our social order what goes widely unexamined and unacknowledged but is still institutionalized is the birth right privilege that enables men to rule women. Through this system there appears in our society a most ingenious form of "interior colonization". This colonization tends to be sturdier than any form of segregation and more rigorous than class stratification, more uniform, certainly more enduring. However, it may

²⁵ Ibid., p. 22.
²⁷ Ibid., pp. 23-24.
appear less visible and influential in our society, Millett maintains, sexual
domination is probably "the most pervasive ideology of our culture and
provides its most fundamental concept of power." This is so because our
society, like other historical civilizations, seems to be basically a patriarchal
society in nature. This fact is evident because in our society military,
industry, technology, universities, science, political office, and finance—in
brief, every avenue of power within the society - is entirely in male hands.
Millett muses that if patriarchal government is viewed as one of the most
powerful institutions whereby half of the human race, which is male,
governs the other half that is female, "the principles of patriarchy appear to
be twofold: male shall dominate female, elder male shall dominate
younger". Patriarchy displays great variety in history and locale and as a
social constant, it runs through all the political, social, or economic forms
and does not mind any variation in caste, class, feudality, bureaucracy and
religion. In democracy, women are given no place and position.

Emphasizing upon the magic and dynastic properties of blood, aristocracy on
the other side, at times allows women to hold power.

Kate Millett ponders over various factors that appear to contribute
to the marginalization of women and corner them in all the domains of life.
First she speculates on ideological reasons and quotes Hannah Arendt who
is of the view that government is upheld by power supported either through
consent or imposed through violence; and "Conditioning to an ideology
amounts to the former." She points out that socialization of a man and a
woman to behave according to a set social and cultural norm gives origin to
the sexual politics. Both of them have to act and behave according to a set of
patterns held appropriate for their genders; and in that man occupies a
privileged position everywhere and woman is compelled to limit her sphere
of action. Millett observes:

Sexual politics obtains consent through the "socialization" of both sexes to basic patriarchal
polities with regard to temperament, role and status. As to status, a pervasive assent to the prejudice of
male superiority guarantees superior status in the male, inferior in the female. The first item
temperament, involves the formation of human personality along stereotyped lines of sex category
("masculine" and "feminine"), based on the needs and values of the dominant group. . . sex role . . .

28 Ibid., p. 25.
29 Ibid.
decrees a consonant and highly elaborate code of conduct, gesture and attitude for each sex. In terms of activity, sex role assigns domestic service and attendance upon infants to the female, the rest of human achievement, interest, and ambition to the male.\textsuperscript{32}

Concentrating on the biological factor, Millett opines that the limited role allotted to women tends to arrest them at the level of biological experience. She maintains that patriarchal religion, popular attitude, and to some degree, science assume psycho-social distinctions to rest upon biological differences between the sexes. Since patriarchy is conceived to be endemic in human social life, much a notion grants patriarchy logical as well as of historical origin. On the differences between man and woman, Millett states that "Whatever the "real" differences between the sexes may be, we are not likely to know them until the sexes are treated differently, that is alike."\textsuperscript{33} Stoller differentiates between sex and gender in preface of his \textit{Sex and Gender}:

\begin{quote}
Dictionaries stress that the major connotation of sex is a biological one. . . . In agreement with this, the word sex, in this work will refer to male or female sex and the component biological parts that determine whether one is a male or a female; the word sexual will have connotations of anatomy and physiology. This obviously means tremendous areas of behaviour, feelings thoughts and fantasies that are related to the sexes and yet do not have primarily biological connotations. It is for some of these psychological phenomena that the term gender will be used: one can speak of the male sex or the female sex, but one can also talk about masculinity and femininity and not necessarily be implying anything about anatomy or physiology. Thus, while sex and gender seem to common sense inextricably bound together, one purpose of this study will be to confirm the fact that two realms (sex and gender) are not inevitably bound in anything like one-to-one relationship, but each may go into quite independent ways.\textsuperscript{34}
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., p. 20.
\end{footnotes}
It is significant, as Kate Millett has observed, to notice that the major distinction between sex and gender is a matter of biological and psychological areas respectively. She asserts that gender is psychological, and therefore cultural:

Gender is a term that has psychological or cultural rather than biological connotations. If the proper terms for sex are "male" and "female", the corresponding terms for gender are "masculine" and "feminine"; these latter may be quite independent of (biological) sex.35

But Millett seems to have supported Money and the Hampsons who are of the view (on the ground of their large series of intersexed patients) that gender role is determined by postnatal forces, irrespective of the anatomy and the physiology of the external biological organs. Millett writes:

In the absence of the complete evidence, I agree in general with Money, and the Hampsons who show in their large series of intersexed patients that gender role is determined by postnatal forces, regardless of the anatomy and physiology of the external genitalia.36

Millett again quotes Money who opines that "the acquisition of a native language is a human counterpart to imprinting", and gender first established "with the establishment of a native language".37 Basing her notion on Jerome Kagin's idea that tickling, touching, handling and speaking to children of pre-speech age in terms of their sexual identity considerably affects their sense of self, Millett argues that our social circumstances locate male and female in two different cultures which is crucial. She states that parents', the peers' and the cultures' notions of what is appropriate to the male or female gender by way of temperament, character, interests, status, worth, gesture, and expression determine the total sum of a child's gender identity.38

35 Ibid., p. 9
38 Kate Millett, "Theory of Sexual Politics", p. 31.
In her comments on sociological factors, Millett holds family as one of the chief institutions of patriarchy which mirrors and connects an individual with a larger society that is a patriarchal unit within a patriarchal whole. As mediator between the individual and the social structure, the family effects control and conformity where political and other social authorities are insufficient. Millett writes:

As the fundamental instrument and the foundation unit of patriarchal society the family and its roles are prototypal. Serving as an agent of the larger society, the family not only encourages its own members to adjust and conform, but acts as a unit in the government of the patriarchal state which rules its citizens through its family heads. Even in patriarchal societies where they are granted legal citizenship, women tend to be ruled through the family alone and have little and no formal relation to the state.39

Millett argues that the three chief institutions of patriarchy, i.e. the family, society and the state, are inter-related and co-operate each other on account of the fear lest each should fall apart. She states that patriarchy for its purpose obtains religious support: Catholicism argues "the father is head of the family", Judaism delegates quasi-priestly authority to the male parent. Besides this, secular governments also confirm this and designate the male as head of the household, taxation, passport etc. Females as the head of the household are regarded undesirable and rarely accepted.

Traditionally, patriarchy grants total ownership to the male head of the family over wife/wives and children, including the powers of physical abuse, murder or sale. He treats other members, particularly female members of his family as mere commodities. The implication of this notion may be evidently observed in Indian and English literatures of great eminence. In Mahabharata, for example Yudhishthir keeps Draupadi, his wife at stake and gambles on her; Bassanio, in The Merchant of Venice, boosts on sacrificing his wife Portia, for the liberation of his friend; and Michael Henchard, in The Mayor of Casterbridge sales his wife, Sussan. Millett describes that the chief contribution of family in patriarchy is the socialization of the young in accordance with the attitudes towards the categories of role, temperament and status prescribed in patriarchal ideology. Patriarchal family emphasizes upon the legitimacy of the child to ensure that the reproduction and socialization of the young takes place within the confinement of family. She quotes Bronislaw Malinowski in her support: "the principle of legitimacy" insists that "no child should be brought into the

39 Ibid., p. 33.
world without a man— and one man at that - assuming the role of sociological father.”

Millett writes that it is not only his social status but also the "economic power upon which the dependents generally rely, the position of the masculine figure within the family — as without- is materially, as well as ideologically, extremely strong.”

Millett discusses the subordination of females in terms of class also. She argues that class and caste have similar connotations regarding the status of females within patriarchy. In a society where status of an individual is determined by the economic, social and educational circumstances of class, it is possible that some women may hold a superior place in social hierarchy than men: as Portia in *The Merchant of Venice* stands higher than Bassanio, Draupadi in *Mahabharata* is superior to Arjun since he goes to marry her by hitting through his arrow the eye of a moving fish because he was an exiled man and his identity was not acknowledged. Millett gives examples different from the above. She says that a black doctor has a higher social rank than a poor white sharecropper. "But race, itself a caste system which subsumes class, persuades the latter citizen that he belongs to a higher order of life. . . ." She argues that the literature of the past is full of incidents in which the caste of virility triumphs over the social status of wealthy or even educated women. Millett maintains that chivalry is "palliative to the injustice of women's social position" and that "chivalrous stance is a game the master group plays in elevating its subject to pedestal level." She states that it is only the concept of romantic love which affords a means of emotional manipulation which the male is free to exploit because "love is the only circumstance in which a female is (ideologically) pardoned for sexual activity".

Class plays a major role within the patriarchal structure of society to set one woman against another. The woman belonging to the low class or position gets often envious of the other's security and prestige; while the envied yearns for other's freedom, adventure, and relations with the outside world. Millett argues:

One of the chief effect of class within patriarchy is to set one woman against another, in the past creating a lively antagonism between whore and

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41 Kale Millett, "Theory of Sexual Politics", p. 35.
42 Ibid., p. 36.
43 Ibid., p. 37.
44 Ibid.
She argues that women transcend the usual class stratifications in patriarchy. Whatever the class of her birth or education, a woman, states Millett, has fewer permanent class associations than does a man. The economic dependency renders a woman to affiliate herself with any class. Millett views economic reasons as one of the major factors that contribute to female subordination. In a traditional patriarchal society, women are not generally allowed either to own or earn their own economic right. Millet writes:

One of the most efficient branches of patriarchal government lies in the agency of its economic hold over its female subjects. In traditional patriarchy, women, as non-persons without legal standing, were permitted no actual economic existence as they could neither own nor earn in their own right.

Millett reflects that women's independence in economic life is viewed with distrust; hence, all kinds of prescriptive agencies (religion, psychology, advertising) protest against the employment of middle class women specially mothers. The toil of working class women is considered to be a necessity by the middle class women which serves the purpose of making cheap labour available in factory and in lower-grade service and clerical positions. Millett points out that its wages and tasks are so unremunerative as to fail, unlike other more prestigious employment of women, to threaten the institutions of patriarchy economically and psychologically: "Women who are employed have two jobs since the burden of domestic service and child care is unrelieved either by day care or other social agencies, or by the co-operation of the husbands". She reflects that women's segregation from education in all streams makes it doubtful that they could equal or exceed their male counterparts in required field of knowledge. She blames patriarchy for all it forbids women to possess: "If knowledge is power, power is also knowledge, and a large factor in their subordinate position is the fairly systematic ignorance patriarchy imposes upon women". She states that the kind and equality of education is not the same for both the genders. Traditionally, patriarchy allows women to acquire occasional minimal education so that they could be literate but closes all the doors for them to higher education.

46 Ibid., p. 39.
47 Ibid., p. 41.
48 Ibid., P. 42.
The difference between the education men and women are given can be observed even since their childhood:

The difference is of course apparent in early socialization, but it persists and enters into higher education as well. Universities, once places of scholarship and the training of a few professionals, now also produce the personnel of technocracy. This is not the case with regard to women. Their own colleges typically produce neither scholars nor professionals not technocrats. Nor are they funded by government and corporations as are male colleges and those co-educational colleges and Universities whose primary function is the education of males. 49

Now Millett deliberates on force. She argues that patriarchy pervades and dominates women in all the walks of life but it is so perfect regarding its system of socialization, so complete in the general assent of its values, and it has so long and universally prevailed the human society that it hardly seems to require violent implementation. Peeping into history, Millett muses that patriarchies have institutionalized force through their legal systems. Islam, for instance, prohibits "illegitimacy" or "sexual autonomy" with a death sentence. In Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia the adulteress is still stoned to death with a mullah presiding at the execution. She exposes the double standard in this regard and argues that there is no penalty for a male correspondent. Even today, in America patriarchal legal systems are depriving women of control over their own bodies; and hence they drive the latter to illegal abortions, it is estimated that nearly two to five thousand women die each year because of this reason. 50

Millett opines that patriarchy depends much upon violence, particularly sexual violence. Traditionally, rape is viewed as an offence one male commits upon another—a matter of abusing his woman. In committing rape or the threat of rape, "the emotions of aggression, hatred, contempt, and the desire to break or violate personality, take a form consummately appropriate to sexual politics." 51 Millett also deliberates on a variety of cruelties and barbarities patriarchy practices on women: the sati execution in India, the crippling deformity of foot binding in China, the life long ignominy of the veil in Islam etc.

49 Ibid.
50 Ibid., pp. 43-44.
51 Ibid., p. 44.
Assessing the anthropological myths and religion, Millett maintains that all of them, in one or other way contribute to the marginalization of women. She quotes H.R. Hays, a well known anthropologist, that "woman's biological differences set her apart . . . she is essentially inferior". He further deliberates in *The Dangerous sex, The Myth of Feminine Evil*:

(Since) human institutions grow from deep and primal anxieties and are shaped by irrational psychological mechanisms . . . socially organized attitudes towards women arise from basic tensions expressed by the male.\(^{52}\)

Millett points out that in a patriarchal society woman does not evolve or articulate the symbols to describe themselves. Patriarchy pervades both the primitive and civilized worlds; hence, all the cultural norms, codes of conduct for female gender are male constructed which justifies male domination over females.

That female sexual functions are thought to be impure is both world wide and persistent. The instances of female oppression and marginalization can be observed everywhere, in literature, in myth, in primitive and civilized life. She analyses how a large number of anthropological literature has been written on the menstruation of women; the slangs denominate menstruation as the "curse". Primitive people interpret the phenomenon of female genitals in terms of a wound; once she was wounded by a bird or snake, now she bleeds, Freud also describes the female genitals in terms of castration. He reveals that the disgust and hatred aroused by patriarchal society for female genitals are also attested by religious, cultural and literary prescription. Women, therefore, are oppressed in various ways on the occasion of the rituals performed in many tribes. Defloration of the maids or virgins is one of them; which tortures a girl both physically and mentally but the social interest, institutionalized in patriarchal ritual and custom supports and promotes male's property interest and prestige.

Kate Millett now considers the effect of patriarchy on human psychology. All the cultural traditions and symbols including language, contribute to women's secondary position. Women in patriarchy "are for the most part marginal citizens when they are citizens at all, their situation is like that of other minorities. . . ."\(^{53}\) Louis Wirth defines the minorities: "A minority group is any group of people who because of their physical or cultural characteristics are singled out from others in the society in which

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\(^{52}\) Cited by Millett "Theory of Sexual Politics", *Sexual Politics*, p. 47.

\(^{53}\) Kate Millett, "Theory of Sexual Politics", p. 55.
they live for differential and unequal treatment." Millett has referred a number of sociologists who have attempted to acknowledge the minority status of women in a patriarchal society; these sociologists are Helen Mayer Hacker, Gunnar Myrdal, Everett C. Hughes, Joseph K. Folsom, Godwin Watson etc.

The second part "Historical Background" of the *Sexual Politics* starts with the third chapter, "The Sexual Revolution". She divides the history of sexual revolution in two phases: first phase spans from 1830 to 1930, so covers the duration of a hundred years; and Second Phase extends from 1930 to 1960, and covers the time of thirty years. Defining the sexual revolution in political area, Millett argues that sexual revolution first of all should demand an end of sexual inhibitions and taboos:

> A sexual revolution would require, perhaps first of all, an end of traditional sexual inhibitions and taboos, particularly those that most threaten patriarchal monogamous marriage: homosexuality, "illegitimacy", adolescent, pre and extra-marital sexuality.\(^{55}\)

She reflects that all ideas that promote negative connotations regarding sexual activity should certainly be eliminated, including the double standard and prostitution. Millett maintains that the goal of revolution should be "a permissive single standard of sexual freedom, and one uncorrupted by the class and exploitative economic bases of traditional sexual alliances".\(^{56}\) A sexual revolution, therefore, would bring the institution of patriarchy to an end and attempt to abolish both the ideology of male supremacy and the traditional socialization by which it is upheld in matters of status, role and temperament. Millett reflects, "The abolition of sex role and the complete economic independence of women would undermine both its (patriarchy) authority and its financial structure."\(^{57}\) It is significant to notice that Millett observed in sexual revolution a force that could eradicate the problem of over population in the country: "Were a sexual revolution completed, the problem of over population might, because vitally linked to the emancipation of women, cease to be the insoluble dilemma it now appears."\(^{58}\)

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56 Ibid.

57 Ibid.

58 Ibid.
Millett is of the view that the last three decades of the nineteenth century and early three decades of the twentieth century was a time which gave equal sexual freedom to both the sexes. Women, in particular, attained in great measure the sexual freedom which they could never get without a devastating loss of social standing or social position. Women in the first phase accomplished "a good measure of sexual freedom and/or equity by struggling towards a single standard of morality"; and therefore, "theirs was the first period in history that faced and tried to solve the issue of the double standard and the inhumanities of prostitution" because it emphasized on the purity/chastity of the boys as much as it expected a girl to possess these attributes. Another significant cause behind the sexual freedom of women in the period 1930-60 was the advanced technology in the manufacturing of contraceptive devices and their proliferation. But the first phase of sexual revolution, according to Millett, failed to accomplish the aims of its theorists and its far-seeing exponents. All that this revolution could do was to make some monumental progress and a groundwork on which the present and the future of the liberty of women could be built. Failing to dismantle the substructure of patriarchal ideology and socialization, it attacked the most evident evils in its "political, economic, and legal superstructure, accomplishing very notable reform in the area of legislative and other civil rights, suffrage, education and employment."

Millett does a comparative study of the two prevailing official versions of the culture's sexual politics: polite and legal. Under the common law which prevailed in England and America at the opening of the period, a woman underwent a "civil death" upon marriage. She could not control her earnings. She was not allowed to choose her domicile, could not manage property legally her own, sign papers or bear witness: "All that the wife acquired by her labour, service, or act during "covertures" became the legal property of the male . . . Her husband became something like a legal keeper, as by marrying she succumbed to a mortifying process which placed her in the same class with lunatics and idiots, who were also "dead in law". Millett states that law entitled the husband to acquire his wife's possession even at the cost of her life; but it seems silent on a husband's irresponsibility and carelessness about the welfare of his wife and children.

He could detain his wife against her will: "English wives who refused to return to their homes were subject to imprisonment." She cites a passage from New York law which was much edifying and punctilious about women their due:

The family Bible, pictures, school books, and all books not exceeding the sum of $50; spinning

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59 Ibid., p. 63.
60 Ibid., p. 64.
61 Ibid., p. 67.
wheels, weaving looms, and stoves; ten sheep and their fleeces, two swine and their Park . . .
All necessary wearing apparel, beds, bedsteads and bedding; the clothing of the window and ornaments proper to her station— one table six chairs six knives and forks, six tea-cups and saucers, one sugar dish, one milk pot, one tea-pot and six spoons.62

She analyses the secular law which asserts that man and woman become one through marriage; but that 'one' is the man. In order to search a perfect definition of the subordination and secondary position of women Millett reads Blackstone's Commentary which accounts for the wife's position in common law:

By marriage, the husband and wife are one person in law: that is, the very being and legal existence of the woman is suspended during marriage or at least is incorporated and consolidated into that of the husband . . . But though our law in general considers man and wife as one person, yet there are some instances in which she is separately considered; as inferior to him, and acting by his compulsions.63

Millett points out many paradoxes embedded in social hierarchy and institutions that contribute in almost all the ways to the marginalization of women. She appears to have deliberated on the violation of all the patriarchal prerogatives to uplift a woman's interests. She views no harm if all the rites and rituals which assert male superiority over women are disregarded; and no harm if the laws of marriage are not obeyed. She gives the example of Henry Blackwell, a liberal feminist, who married Lucy Stone in 1855 and did not follow any rule and law which implied female subordination. Millett cites the whole paragraph which asserted Blackwell's idea of marriage:

While we acknowledge our mutual affection by publicly assuming the relationship of husband and wife . . . We deem it a duty to declare that this

act on our part implies no sanction of, nor promise of voluntary obedience to such of the present laws of marriage as refuse to recognize the wife as an independent, rational being. . . . We protest especially against the laws which give the husband:

1. The custody of wife’s person.

2. The exclusive control and guardianship of their children.

3. The sole ownership of her personal and the use of her real estate, unless previously settled upon her, or placed in the hands of trustees, as in the case of minors, lunatics and idiots.

4. The absolute right to the product of her industry.

5. Also against any laws which give to the widower so much larger and more permanent an interest in the property of his deceased wife than they give to the widow in part of the deceased husband.

6. Finally, against the whole system by which "the legal existence of the wife is suspended during marriage", so that in most states, she neither has legal part in the choice of her residence, nor can she make a will, nor sue or be sued in her own name, nor inherit property.64

In this way, Millett pointed out several ethical, legal and social paradoxes embedded in the fabrics of a patriarchal society. According to Millett, a woman is as powerful intelligent and efficient in all the spheres of life as a man. She should not be viewed and interpreted in terms of what a man is not or he does not wish to be. She should be given same rights and social position as a man, because a man is her mate, and not her master. In her support, Millett quoted a great feminist and abolitionist, Sojourner Truth, a slave in New York until that state finally abolished slavery in 1827.

Speaking at a woman's rights convention in Akron, Ohio in 1851, Truth replied a cleric who was of the view that being helpless physical weakling, a woman is not entitled to civil rights.

That man over there says women need to be helped into carriages and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over puddles, or gives me the best place- and aim I a woman?

Look at this arm! I have ploughed and planted and gathered into barns, and no man could head one-and ain't I a woman?

I could work as much and eat as much as a man- when I could get it-and bear the lash as well! And ain't I a woman?

I have borneee thirteen children, and seen most of 'em sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me. And ain't I a woman?65

Now Millett deliberates on women's movement and the concrete reforms it brought in specific areas of education, political organization of women (specially around the issue of suffrage), and employment. Since education is the first priority for the liberation of any group long oppressed, Millett makes education the main threshold of her feminist observation. She deliberates that women have been the natural losers regarding education. It was Renaissance which furnished first implied theories for female education. But all sorts of education recommended for women led them in one or other way to docility, inferiority and relativity. Female education, in those days, was not considered to be a subject beyond the threshold level of learning. Usually it emphasized upon "virtue" which stands for obedience, servility, and a sexual inhibition. The whole concern of female education, however, was relative to man. Whatever she was taught and trained was supposed to make her as virtuous and beautiful as to please her male counterpart in all the possible ways. The chief objective of the education of women was to make them obedient and submissive to their husbands' desire. She cited J.J. Rousseau, who contributed so much to the French Revolution, on the issue of education of women:

The whole education of women ought to be relative to men. To please them, to be useful to them, to make themselves loved by and honoured

65 Ibid., p. 116.
by them, to educate them when young, to care for them when grown, to counsel them, to make life sweet and agreeable to them - these are the duties of women at all times, and what should be taught them from their infancy.\footnote{Jean Jacques Rousseau, \textit{A Treatise On Education}, ed. W.H. Pyne (New York: Oxford University Press, 1906), p. 263.}

In nineteenth century, the education of women followed Rousseau's precept. In 1837 Oberlin was the first college to offer women an education unquestionably equal to that of man. In the coming days, there were a number of colleges, Millett deliberates, which started catering women education equal to that of men: Vassar in 1865, Smith and Wellesley in 1875, Raddiff in 1882, Bryn Mawr 1885. In England, Queen's College was founded at London University in 1848, and Bedford in 1849. In both the countries, (England and America) the growth of higher education for women, Millett reflects, was the result of two factors: the opening of teaching to women and feminist agitation: "The spread of universal primary and secondary education was one of the great ideals of the nineteenth century."\footnote{Kate Millett, "The Sexual Revolution", p. 76.} Millett gives an example in detail of the great Victorian treatise, \textit{The Princess} which deliberately presents the problem. Ida, the heroine of the poem is a princess and a poet whose fierce desire for learning makes her passionate and commanding in her attitudes. The hero wishes to marry her, but he is not ready to marry an equal. The hero's fear raises several questions like what would happen to men if women will become their intellectual equals? Would men be challenged in all the spheres of life? Or would their male authority be in peril and be negated by female assertiveness? Demanding equality in education, Ida sets a University for women because men were not willing to share their university. Millett reveals Tennyson's idea of displaying Victorian ideology regarding women's education:

\begin{quote}
He has loaded the question by blowing up the period's own solution of segregated educated to the proportions of a totally segregated society. All this is an interesting comment on the Victorian feeling that the female must relinquish sexuality if she is to be in any sense autonomous . . . (and) maintain her social and therefore economic position.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 77-78.}
\end{quote}
Ida, as a result, flatly refuses to marry the prince - until he "abandons the role of invalid." However, Ida's college is closed; and "the prince has co-opted all her theories with the unctuous ingenuity of the doctrine of the separate spheres."69

Attainment of education led women to form several political organizations to promote the interests of women. It was Abolitionist Movement that provided American women their first opportunity for political actions and organizations and made United states the centre of Women's movement. A lot of changes were taking place in this regard made several feminists like Mill to continue the movement; it was in 1866 that Mill presented the first suffrage petition in the Parliament and published his Subjection of Women three years later. It may be noted that during the period of the first phase, women for their employment demanded the due or proper payment for their worthwhile work. They demanded, writes Millett, an opportunity to enter the most prestigious fields of work; they also protested for their control over their earnings. Millett writes:

Despite the dreadful hardships of exploitative and discriminatory employment, they attained through it a measure of that economic, social and psychological independence which is the sine qua non of freedom.70

Kate Millett compares two of the ground breaking documents that discussed at a greater length sexual politics in the Victorian period - Mills Subjection of Women and Ruskin's "Of Queen's Gardens". She observes that in Mill "One encounters the realism of sexual politics, in Ruskin its romance and the benign aspect of its myth."71 Mill, she states, describes the actual situation of women, whereas Ruskin hardly appears to free himself from Victorian ethos. Denying his becoming male chauvinist, Ruskin attempts to refute "left" feminism, arguing that women are loved and honoured, have nothing to complain of and are all in all in home. In contrast to him, Mill ascribes women's actual position through history and attacks on the conditions of legal bondage, debilitating education and the "wifely subjection" within the Victorian period. J.S. Mill writes:

That the principle which regulates the existing social relations between the two sexes- the legal subordination of one sex to the other - is wrong in itself, and now one of the chief hindrances to

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69 Ibid., p. 79.  
70 Ibid., p. 88.  
71 Ibid., p. 89.
human improvement; and that it ought to be replaced by a principle of perfect equality, admitting no power or privilege on the one side, nor disability on the other."\textsuperscript{72}

Ruskin opines that the condition of the upper and middle class women depends upon the nature and abilities of the woman herself. If she holds an equal position to that of a man, she could be a member of the elite class. Making out the differences between the worlds of men and women, Ruskin reserves the privileges of human endeavour for the former and limits the scope of the latter. Millett quotes Ruskin:

\begin{quote}

The man's power is active, progressive, defensive. He is eminently the doer, the creator, the discoverer, the defender. His intellect is for speculation and invention; his emergy for adventure, for war and for conquest. . . . But the woman's power is for rule, not for battle and her intellect is not for invention or recreation, but sweet ordering arrangement and decision. . . . By her office and place, she is protected from all danger and temptation.\textsuperscript{73}
\end{quote}

Kate Millett writes that Ruskin has scrutinized the fact of ruler and ruled in pretentious and inflated language and deliberately confused the customary with the natural, the convenient with the inevitable. On the other side, J.S. Mill, reflects Millett, writes that master class have always regarded their privileges as natural and justified their injustices on the grounds of nature and emphasized that the subordinated groups are born to their position and reserved for it by God. The subjection of women to men, therefore, has become in Mills view a universal custom, and any departure from, or denial of this would appear unnatural. Ruskin's arguments regarding separate spheres of man and woman based on natural proclivity are undermined by Mill's logical thesis that nothing can be known of the inherent nature of a personality. Mill deliberates:

\begin{quote}

. . . I deny that anyone knows, or can know, the nature of the two sexes, so long as they have only seen in their present relation to one another. . . . What is
\end{quote}


now called the nature of woman is an eminently artificial thing — the result of forced repression in some directions unnatural stimulation in others. It may be asserted without scruple, that no other class of dependents have had their character so entirely distorted from its natural proportions by their relation with their masters. 74

Millett writes that Mill noted feminine quality as a construct of a highly artificial system of cultivation. Ruskin created a sphere in accordance with patriarchy and fitted women in that construction. Mill on the contrary wishes to train women in all the categories of art and science.

Kate Millett compares them on the issues of problem of education also. Ruskin expresses his surprise on how education may fit women for any widely extending duty until it is agreed or defined what their true constant duty is. Ruskin, therefore, seems to disapprove women's education in real sense - because his formula of female education is inferior to that of men at all standards. He believes in the subordination of wives. According to him, all sorts of female education should be related to the pleasure and service of men. Women should be educated and wise, "not for self-development, but for self renunciation." 75 He further writes:

A man ought to know any language or science he learns, thoroughly; while a woman ought to know the same language or science only so far as may enable her to sympathize in her husband's pleasures, and in those of his best friends. 76

Mill deliberates on women's education in such words:

Men do not want solely the obedience of women, they want their sentiments. All men, except the most brutish, desire to have, in the woman most nearly connected with him not a forced slave but a willing one; not a slave merely, but a favourite. They have therefore put everything in practice to enslave their minds. . . . The masters of women wanted more than simple obedience, and they

75 John Ruskin, p. 145.
76 Ibid., p. 153.
turned the whole force of education to effect their purpose.\textsuperscript{77}

Millett muses that it is hard to believe that Mill and Ruskin have discussed the same subject. Both of them discuss woman sincerely and carefully. But their arguments differ and make different standpoints. Millet points out that "Ruskin's purpose is to ennoble a system of subordination through hopeful rhetoric, whereas Mill's purpose is to expose it."\textsuperscript{78}

Not only this, Millett compares these two writers even on the domestic spheres of women; and both of them differ once again in their approaches. Pondering over the Victorian themes like the Home and the Goodness of Women, Ruskin deliberates that home is the place of peace and shelter from all sorts of dangers, injuries, terrors, doubts and division. Wherever "a true wife comes, this home is always round her"\textsuperscript{79}, while, Mill approaches the subject differently. For him, home is the centre of a system he defines as "domestic slavery". He proclaims that woman is no more than a bond servant within a marital life; and a husband is sovereign in his household. He has right so as to kill his wife; and no law condemns him for that because in doing so he is only executing his right. But, if a wife commits the murder of her husband, the penalty is death by burning.\textsuperscript{80} He gives the opinion that no wife is exempted from sexual harassment on account of the fact that both the partners may despise each other. John Ruskin, on the other side, speculates that male duties meaning privileges (war, money, politics, learning) are "public"; whereas female duties meaning responsibilities are "private". Ruskin's idea that social responsibility is a female province appears to Millett ridiculous because of two reasons. First, being dispossessed both legally and economically, women become unable to help other deprived groups of persons. Secondly, the device enables men, and specially the men of ruling class, to ignore or deputize their own enormous responsibilities to the poor whom they oppress. Millett meditates that "feminine self sacrifice, which so inspires Ruskin, is in Mill's eyes only a despicable self-immolation, both wasteful and tasteless."\textsuperscript{81} Mill asserts for the complete emancipation of women. It is significant to note that in her comparative study of both the writers, Kate Millett views in Mill the seeds of revolution and in Ruskin only a reaction; so she seems to prefer Mill to Ruskin. Millett writes: "In Mill's tone one hears the precursor of revolution; in Ruskin's only reaction tactfully phrased. In 1860's Ruskin's muddled

\textsuperscript{77} J.S. Mill, pp. 443-44.
\textsuperscript{78} Kate Millett, "The Sexual Revolution", p. 98.
\textsuperscript{79} John Ruskin, p. 145.
\textsuperscript{80} J.S. Mill, p. 461.
\textsuperscript{81} Kate Millett, "The Sexual Revolution", p. 106.
gallantry was in every mouth, but by 1920s Mill's clear voice had prevailed.”

Now Millett studies Friedrich Engels' The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State. She argues that Engels stands above from rest of the feminist theorist of his time because he was the only theorists to bring the problem of patriarchal family organizations to a critical scrutiny. He believed that origins of property are rooted in the subjection and ownership of women on which institutions of patriarchy are grounded. He appears to have considerably been influenced by Bachofen whose Das Mutterrecht was the first formulation of the matriarchal theory of origins. Millett studied that Engels viewed all evils wielded in the fabrics of patriarchy: "the ownership of persons, beginning with women and progressing to other forms of slavery, the institutions of class, caste, rank, ruling and propertied classes, the steady development of an unequally distributed wealth and finally the state.”

Kate Millett argues that the value of Engels' contribution to sexual revolution lay in his analysis of patriarchal marriage and family. He declared that the marriage and family were built upon the ownership of women. Being a Marxist, Engels distinguished between the economic classes of his own time and insisted that economically unprivileged classes made practical use of women; whereas economically privileged classes, having others to serve them, liked to make her rather a decorative or aesthetic object.

Engels also reflected on prostitution. To him, prostitution is the natural product of traditional monogamous marriage. Concept of chastity for women, and the punishment that springs from its violation, makes marriage monogamous for the weaker sex. Whatever society's official attitude may be, the demand of prostitution continues within male supremacist culture; it is only communist China which is said to be the only country in the world which has no prostitution. Engels considers prostitution as one of the social institutions which contribute to suppress women:

It continues the old sexual freedom- for the benefit of the man. In reality not only permitted, but also assiduously practiced by the ruling class, it is denounced only nominally. Still in practice, this denunciation strikes by no means the men who indulge in it, but only the women.

82 Ibid., p. 108.
83 Ibid., p. 120.
In Engels, Millett observes an insight which can provide a model for change. He realized that "Women's legal disabilities were not the cause but merely the effect of patriarchy". Making less effective "such invidious law", Millett argues, "would not give women equal status unless it were accompanied with total social and economic equality and every opportunity of personal fulfillment in productive work." Engels insists on the freedom, in all respects, of both the parties for any contract like marriage. His observation here seems to be based on the fact that all the economic resources in man's hands makes his relation with his wife in similar to the relationship of one economic class to another:

In the great majority of cases the man has to earn a living and to support his family, at least among the possessing classes. He thereby obtains a superior position that has no need of any legal special privilege. In the family he is the bourgeois, the woman represents the proletariat.

Kate Millett cites Engels at several places as she does other critics in her support and insists that sexual revolution cannot reach a fruitful completion until it includes the economic and social areas as well in its sphere of action. In her support, Millett cites Engels: "the emancipation of women is dependent on the reintroduction of the whole female sex into the public industries. To accomplish this, the monogamous family must cease to be the industrial unit of society."

Now Kate Millett concentrates on the responses to sexual revolution in the literature of the period. She searches three different response. First is the realistic or revolutionary. It includes the radical and revolutionary ideas of critics and writers like Friedrich Engels, J.S. Mill, Ibsen, G.B. Shaw, Charles Dickens and Meredith. This school of thinkers either deliberately expresses notions in theory or polemic or indirectly in the fictive situations of the plays or novels. The second response belongs to the sentimental and chivalrous school of which Ruskin's "Of Queen's Gardens" is the most perfect example. "It operates through", Millett observes, "an appeal to propriety and protestation of its good intentions, rather than through any specific recommendations for change." Serious education for women, knowingly or unknowingly, is conceived to be a threat to male hegemony: economic, social and psychological. Third and the last response

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85 Kate Millett, "The Sexual Revolution", p. 125.
86 Friedrich Engels, p. 90.
87 Ibid, pp. 91-92.
88 Kate Millett, "The Sexual Revolution", p. 127.
is the school of fantasy which adopts a masculine stand. It attempts to express the male response to what it describes as feminine evil, namely sexuality.

Kate Millett is perhaps one of the first feminist critic to do a feminist study of a literary work. She brings three novels by Hardy, Meredith and Charlotte Bronte and a prose poem by Oscar Wilde, to her scrutiny.

First of all, she studies Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* and concludes that the book is a significant contribution to the literature of the sexual revolution in a number of ways. First, it presents a severe criticism of the institution of marriage and makes a plea for easy divorce. She argues that *Jude the Obscure* is the first of Hardy's novels where people get divorce but it cannot help them in a world where marriage is corrupt. Secondly, Hardy created in his heroine, Sue, an intelligent rebel against sexual politics and he exposed the forces which defeat such a rebel. She writes: "*Jude the Obscure* is on very solid ground when attacking the class system, but when it turns to sexual revolution, Hardy himself is troubled and confused."89

After Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*, Kate Millett reads Meredith's *The Egoist* and argues that both the novels attack the conventions surrounding patriarchal marriage. Meredith's Heroine, Clara Middleton, has no money of her own and is prevented from earning any. Clara, therefore, is paralysed with meagre education, her economic impotency and her conditioning to docility and respectability. An avowed feminist, Meredith views in women, Millett deliberates, an oppressed class dominated by male self-centeredness "prevented from developing as human beings by a system which prostitutes them in and out of marriage and deliberately miseducates them."90 She captures the whole life and fate of Clara in following words:

Throughout the novel she was person in the process of becoming, but by the last page she has not succeeded in becoming anyone but Mrs. Vernon Whitford, which is to say, no one at all. Meredith knows how to save her from the egoist, but he can think of nothing else to do for her. . . . This is a notably deficient and a rather tritely masculine attitude; for all his good intentions regarding the crippling character of feminine education, the feudal character of patriarchal marriage, and the egotism of male assumptions, Meredith appears incapable of transcending them and consequently mistakes

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89 Ibid., p. 134.
90 Ibid., p. 136.
the liberating turmoil of the sexual revolution for the mundane activities of a match making bureau.\textsuperscript{91}

Millett also discusses thoroughly Charotte Bronte's *Villette* which again presents a compendium of the plight of a woman in a patriarchal society. Lucy, the heroine of the novel, represents the ambition of every conscious young girl in the world. She wants to be free; she is crazy to escape, to learn, to work, to go to places. But she is traumatically cast out of "the middle class quite unprepared to live, for all the world had expected her to exist parasitically."\textsuperscript{92} About the novel, *Villette* and Lucy's life, Millett writes: "As there is no remedy to sexual politics in marriage, Lucy very logically doesn't marry. But it is also impossible for a Victorian novel to recommend a woman not to marry. So Paul suffers a quite sea burial."\textsuperscript{93}

Kate Millett, then, studies many poems and plays of Victorian era. She reads Tennyson, Ibsen, Shaw, Oscar Wilde and others. She reflects that both *A Doll's House* and *Salome* are confrontation drama. Nora confronted every patriarchal convention and masculine prejudice. She battled the sexual politics openly and rationally, while Oscar Wilde in *Salome* was not able to. "He could dare only a brief demonstration; then came condign sentence and silence. When Wilde fell in 1895, Nora and her band of revolutionaries had few more years of insurrection left. . ."\textsuperscript{94}

In her fourth chapter, "The Counterrevolution", Millett deliberates on the period from 1930 to 1960. She states that the first phase of hundred years ended in reform rather than revolution because sexual revolution requires a truly radical social transformation. Without such a drastic change it would, according to Millett, be impossible to eradicate the social evils which are most offensive: the economic disabilities of women, the double standard, prostitution, venereal disease, coercive marital unions, and involuntary parenthood. While patriarchal ideology was eradicated and patriarchy reformed, the essential patriarchal order remained because most of us conceive that any social organization viewed as an alternative to its perpetuation will be a chaos.

Millett observes that Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia can be taken as a model for clarifying the problems the other societies faced in the sexual revolution. She cites several instances and citations given by the officials. In Nazi Germany, for example, the government reserved for

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{91} Ibid., p. 139.
\item \textsuperscript{92} Ibid., p. 145.
\item \textsuperscript{93} Ibid., p. 147.
\item \textsuperscript{94} Ibid., p. 156.
\end{itemize}
women a quota of one in ten Universities. The actual purpose of Nazi ideology was not to return women to the home, but to "take women out of professions and put them into low paid occupations." In his Nuremberg speech of September 8, 1934, Hitler spoke that Jewish communism was the origin of detested sexual revolution: "The message of women's emancipation is a message discovered solely by the Jewish intellect and its content is stamped with the same spirit." In Mein Kamph, Hitler again stated that "the German girl is a State Subject and only becomes a State Citizen when she marries." Being attacked by the international feminist movement and the liberal West for the treatment of women in Germany, Hitler defended his notion, arguing that what the former regarded as yoke and oppression were for women blessings. Being charged of depriving women of employment and work, Hitler argued that he only wanted to create to the greatest extent the possibility of founding a family and having children because his nation needed them above all things. Millett cites another thinker, F.F.S. Klink, who opines:

When we eliminate women from public life, it is not because we want to dispense with them but because we want to give them back their essential honour. . . . The outstanding and highest calling of woman is always that of wife and mother, and it would be unthinkable misfortune if we allowed ourselves to be turned from this point of view."

Along with this, in Nazi Germany, women were forbidden to attain equality in other spheres too. Sex education in Nazi Germany was racism. Abortion became a risky affair and penalized by extreme measures. Unmarried women were considered to have transgressed: "Every aspect of Nazi sexual regulations, including its masculine tinge of neo-paganism, was of a character which might well be described as a state sponsored and legally enforced sexual counterrevolution."

In Soviet Union also an attempt was made to eliminate patriarchy by reforming its most basic institution - the family. All the possible laws were passed to free individuals from the claims of family - free marriage and divorce, contraception, and abortion on demand. Millett opines that whether

it was Nazi Germany, Soviet Union or Russia, everywhere it was noticed that the authoritarian and patriarchal mind set cannot

separate the liberation of women from racial extinction and the death of love, an equation of human affection and reproduction with slavish subordination, excessive or accidental progeny, and servile affection which never fails to convict the speaker.\textsuperscript{100}

Millett notes that the pressure of official suppression cannot account for the counterrevolution. She states that it can be realized that sexual revolution collapsed from within at several places. She gives the impression that real causes of counterrevolution lie in the fact that the sexual revolution "concentrated on the super structure of patriarchal policy, changing its legal forms, its more flagrant abuses, altering its formal educational patterns, but leaving the socialization processes of temperament and role differentiations intact."\textsuperscript{101}

Now Millett describes how the double standards and male biased practices were bound in certain ideologies and theories. First of all she concentrates on what formed the complexes of women:

It was expressed in inferiority feelings, in contempt for their own sex, in revolt against their passive role, in envy of man's greater freedom, in the ambition to equal man in intellectual or artistic achievements, in striving for independence... and in all sorts of devices to make up for the social disadvantages of not being a man.\textsuperscript{102}

Millett studies Freud first who finds two main causes for women's sufferings: sexual inhibition and the great discontentment with their social circumstances. She elaborates Freud's concept of "penis envy":

"They notice the penis of a brother or playmate, strikingly visible and of large proportions, at once

\textsuperscript{100} Ibid., p. 176.
\textsuperscript{101} Ibid., p. 177.
recognize it as the superior counterpart of their own small and inconspicuous organ, and from that time forward fall a victim to envy for the penis." 103

Millett deliberates that much of the Freudian theory depends upon the moment of discovery. She disapproves Freud for charging an adult woman with these values. She maintains that the whole feminine development is interpreted in terms of the cataclysmic moment of discovered castration. According to Millett, girls are fully "cognizant of male supremacy long before they see their brother's penis. It is so much a part of their culture, so entirely present in the favouritism of school and family . . ." 104 She again states:

Freud's doctrine of penis envy is in fact a superbly timed accusation, enabling masculine sentiment to take the offensive again as it had not since the disappearance of overt misogyny when the pose of chivalry became fashionable. 105

Millett now concentrates on Freud's definition of male activity and female passivity. Freud's basic logic behind the presumption of activity and passivity depends on the manifestation of cohabitation. He argues, Millett reports, that in sexual intercourse man is more active and he actively controls female passivity: "The male pursues the female for the purposes of sexual union seizes hold of her and penetrates into her . . . by this you have precisely reduced the characteristics of masculinity to the factor of aggressiveness." 106

Freud may, Millett reflects, be forgiven for all he did to account for female passivity and marginalization on the ground of his severe patriarchal upbringing. She argues that Freud "conceded nothing, or responded with irrelevant banter, amused to acknowledge that not all men are paragons of masculinity, and that some women can nearly attain the characteristic virtues of masculinity." 107

104 Kate Millett, "The Counterrevolution", p. 187.
105 Ibid., p. 189.
Kate Millett studiously studies some post-Freudian critics, namely Marie Bonapart and Helene Deutsch, who ground their critical notions on Freudian concept of "Oedipus complex", libido, penis-envy etc. She argues that these critics more or less draw the same conclusion. Some critics, argues Millett, are of the view that Feminism or the Women's Movement stood on the bedrock foundation of hatred: Marx, is viewed with an "unconscious hatred of political authority." Mill is dismissed as "passive feminine man"; and activists like Wollstonecraft were regarded as the real enemy:

Wollstonecraft is suspect not only as a psychiatric case history . . . but because she and the folly the authors designate as feminism had so corrupted youth as to bring about a state of "sexual indulgence" indistinguishable from a "monkey house". . .

Kate Millett now describes what she calls the influence of functionalism. The term "functionalism" refers to the social sciences tended to turn from political or historical considerations to focus their attention upon social structures, providing careful descriptions of how theoretic models operated." Functionalism attempts to manifest the justification of the system it perceives. Instead of ignoring values, it seeks to eschew history, patriarchy etc. Under functionalism, Millett studies all the social, political and anthropological agencies/institutions which try, overtly or covertly, to display sexual politics. She devotes third and the last part of the book to three literary writers who in their literary works reflected and shaped the social structures and dominant attitudes.

Kate Millett writes her fifth chapter on D.H. Lawrence. Dividing the chapter in five sections, she concentrates on his prominent novels in each section which appear to have been written to approve Freud's notion of female sexuality in one or other way. These novels are Lady Chatterley's Lover, Sons and Lovers, The Rainbow, Women in Love, Aaron's Rod and The Plumed Serpent. In Lady Chatterley's Lover, she deals with Freud's notion of "Male's activity and female's passivity." In his Sons and Lovers, Lawrence deals with Freudian concept of "Oedipus Complex". The third Section on The Rainbow and Women in Love, manifests a transition in sexual affinity from mother to mistress, a shift that, when obtained, produces, powerful feelings of hostility and a negative attitude towards women of his own generation. Lawrence's "peculiar solution seems to marry and smother them . . . and then to fare "beyond Women" to homosexual attachments, forming

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109 Ibid., p. 220.
sexual-political alliances with other males." In fourth section on *Aaron's Rod*, Lawrence formally renounces love for power. Millett states that for Lawrence it makes no difference between love and power:

In Lawrence's mind, love had become the knack of dominating another person-power means much the something. Lawrence first defined power as the ability to dominate a woman; later he applied the idea to other political situations, extending the notion of Herrschaft (erotic) to inferior males mastered by a superior male. Of course this is the political structure of patriarchy itself.

In the fifth and last section on *The Plumed Serpent*, Lawrence invents a religion or liturgy of male supremacy: "One of the pillars of the old patriarchy was its religion, and as Lawrence was bored with Christianity, suspicious of its egalitarian potential, and quite uninterested in other established creeds . . . he is content that it assume the blunt form of phallic worship; his totemic penis is alpha and omega, the word improved into flesh."

Kate Millett devotes her sixth chapter to Henry Miller. She quotes Karl Shapiro, arguing that Miller "is screamingly funny without making fun of sex . . . accurate and poetic in the highest degree." Millett states that Miller is a "compendium of American sexual neurosis, and his value lies not in freeing us from such afflictions, but in having had the honesty to express and dramatize them." She further writes that Miller articulated "the disgust, the contempt, the hostility, the violence, and the sense of filth with which our culture, or more specifically, its masculine sensibility, surrounds sexuality."

Miller regarded himself as a disciple of Lawrence; but, the liturgical pomp with which Lawrence manifested sexuality bears no resemblance to Miller's determined profanity. She compares Miller with Lawrence:

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110 Ibid., p. 257.
111 Ibid., p. 269.
112 Ibid., p. 283.
114 Kate Millett, "Henry Miller", p. 295.
Lawrention hero sets about his mission with notorious gravity and makes love by an elaborate political protocol. . . . But Miller and his confederates - for Miller is a gang — just "fuck" women and discard them. . . . His success prepared the way for Miller's escalation to open contempt. Lawrence had still to deal with persons; Miller already feels free to speak of objects. Miller simply converts woman to "cunt"-thing, commodity, matter.\textsuperscript{115}

Millett maintains that Miller's "virulent sexism is beyond question an honest contribution to social and psychological understanding which we can hardly afford to ignore."\textsuperscript{116}

Kate Millett studies Norman Mailer in the seventh chapter and finds him highly paradoxical, full of ambivalence, and man of divided conscience. She states that Mailer has dealt sexuality in terms of animal instinct; he finds in sexual intercourse a violence, a cruelty with which, his predecessors Lawrence and Miller, attempt to subordinate women through oppression. Millett writes: "As sex is war, war is sexual. Can one deny "the physical core of life"? The connection between sex and violence not only as metaphor, but seems to express a conviction about the nature of both phenomena."\textsuperscript{117}

Kate Millett has devoted her last chapter to Jean Genet for two fold purposes. First, his homosexual analysis of sexual politics gives insights into the arbitrary status content of sexual role; and secondly, it was against the taboo of homosexuality that Mailer's counterrevolutionary order has hurled. About Genet, Sartre constructs a notion that it was a life long feeling of guilt that his foster parents branded on him since his childhood when they caught him stealing and sent him for next fifteen years in "children's hell" of Metray that led Genet to homosexuality. Genet, therefore, carried a sex ethic founded upon sexual guilt and inferiority. His \textit{The Balcony} concentrates on the political connotations of sex role as power, it is a case of failed rebellion, Millett states. While in his \textit{The Blacks}, Genet asserts that blacks, colonials and women must find freedom, if they could, by an angry assertion of selfhood and solidarity. Whatever the case about Genet might have been, Millett concludes about him that "Alone of our contemporary writers, Genet

\textsuperscript{115} Ibid., pp. 296-297.
\textsuperscript{116} Ibid., p. 313.
\textsuperscript{117} Ibid., p. 316.
has taken thought of women as an oppressed group and revolutionary force, and chosen to identity with them.\textsuperscript{118}

**Range of Thought**

It makes no difference to study Millet's arena of thoughts and that of her predecessors Virginia Woolf and Simone de Beauvoir. All of them attempt in different ways to pinpoint female subordination in all most all the spheres of life along with the reasons that play an active role in women's marginalization. But Kate Millett's study differs from that of Woolf and Beauvoir in relation to the range of thought because hers is not only, like her predecessor's, a philosophical and intellectual pursuit but also a scholarly venture to explore and theorize the notions which are influential and pervading in society. Writing her doctoral thesis, Millett does not expand and elaborate her notions as much as Beauvoir did in her *The Second Sex*. Most of the time Millett kept herself busy in picking up instances and ideas of the critics related to them in order to expose the covert forces which she calls "politics". She observes those forces as powers that spring from patriarchy and its institutions and seeks female marginalization and subordination to male. She views patriarchy as a system that proceeds its rules and laws in all the sections of society.

Unlike Beauvoir, Millett does not elaborately discuss history, myth and the other areas to seek the secondary position of women. She limits her study of research basically to the nineteenth and twentieth century Europe. It is surprising for several critics that Millett owes so much to Beauvoir and she does not acknowledge her debt. Toril Moi is very critical of Millett: "Her views of sexual politics are obviously deeply influenced by Simone de Beauvoir's pioneering analysis in *The Second Sex*, but this debt is never acknowledged by Millett, who makes only two tangential references to Beauvoir's essay."\textsuperscript{119} It is possible that Millett, as she assumes to differ from Beauvoir in her purpose, does not register her debt to her precursor because she does not find Beauvoir as theoretical and specific as she attempts to be in her thesis. Simone de Beauvoir talks of women's subordinate and relative position in a broad area; she hardly misses any field where the existence of men and women is conceived. Kate Millett, on the other side, concentrates her study only to explore on theoretical and polemical grounds the politics wielded in the fabrics of society. In fact, what Beauvoir studies to explore the secondary position of women, Millett studies it to expose the politics that mars women's interests. She also attempts to point out how the formation of patriarchal attitude becomes a universal reality, and so the destiny of women. For this purpose, Millett devotes a large part of her thesis to literature under different headings, such as "Instances of Sexual Politics", "Literary", and "The Literary Reflections".

\textsuperscript{118} Ibid., p. 357.

In her *Sexual Politics*, Millet seeks to display how patriarchal ideology has "kept pace with profound changes in attitudes towards sexuality, which in Millett's broad definition generally means social, economic and political relations between men and women."  

About the area Millett covers in her ground breaking book, Cora Kaplan opines:

*Sexual Politics* sets literary analysis against a specific theory of women's sub-ordination, in relation to ideologies of gender difference inscribed in other contemporary discourses and ideologies.  

Kaplan again states:

Millett has researched very widely; she touched most of the issues that feminists had developed in the seventies. The historical section marks off the period 1830-1930 as the time of 'Sexual Revolution' and the period of 1930-1960 as "the Counter Revolution."  

Assuming literature as the sole and solid means of the reflection of society, Millett in the very beginning of the book gives literary references from three different Authors, Miller, Mailer and Genet which depict the domination of one group of persons over the other group through sexual relation. In the next chapter, she ascribes the formation of ideology that helps patriarchy to thrust its power upon women. She discusses the subject from many standpoints: "Ideological", "Biological", Sociological", "Class", "Economic and Educational", "Force", "Anthropological: Myth and Religion" and "Psychological". In her speculations on ideological reasons, she argues that sexual politics works through the socialization of both the sexes to basic patriarchal norms with regard to temperament, role and status. Since all the roles allotted to women, Millett argues, tends to arrest them at the level of their biological experience, whatever in the world is regarded or described under human activity becomes the privilege of man.

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121 Ibid.

122 Ibid., p. 17.
Millett attempts to locate how far biological attributes of a man and a woman help in deciding power structure between male and female. She opines that mere physical power does not determine sexual politics. Instead, civilization also substitutes other methods (technique, weaponry and knowledge) for those of physical strength: "the argument of physical strength as a theory of patriarchal origins would hardly constitute a sufficient explanation". In this section, Millett discusses the difference between sex and gender and quotes several critics in this regard. She states that it is because of the social circumstances, that male and female become two different cultures in their life experiences. It is significant to notice that Millett and Beauvior appear to have formed the same notion about the female gender when the latter states that one is not born but rather becomes a woman, it is civilization as a whole which produces this creature which is described as feminine.

In her sociological view, Millett holds family as the chief institution of patriarchy to subordinate women. She argues, "Mediating between the individual and social structure, the family effects control and conformity where political and other authorities are insufficient." Traditionally, a male member of the family becomes the head who governs the other members of the family; in case of women, his governance becomes harder. Millett quotes Sir Henry Maine in her support: “The eldest male parent is absolutely supreme in his household. His dominion extends to life and death and is as qualified over his children and their houses as over his slaves.”

Similarly, she ponders over class, economic, educational, force, anthropological and psychological factors that contribute to form the ideology which is governed by patriarchy. She says that in all the walks of life women have to face the politics working against their gender. Millett writes:

Patriarchy has God on its side. One of its most effective agents of control is the powerfully expeditious character of its doctrines as to the nature and origin of the female and the attribution to her alone of the dangers and the evils it imputes to sexuality.”

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123 Kate Millett, "Theory of Sexual Politics", p. 27.
124 Ibid., p. 33.
126 Kate Millett, "Theory of Sexual Politics", p. 51.
It is interesting to notice that Millett does not look forward towards history and society as Simone de Beauvoir does. What Beauvoir searches in society, rituals and myths as the cause of female Subordination, Millett - searches the same thing in canonical literary texts of the Victorian period. Beauvoir finds out examples of female marginalization from the real incidents and experiences of an individual in society and explores the roots of her subordination in several traditional, customary and ritualistic male biased practices. But, Millett tries to locate a politics against female gender and seeks the causes of her secondary position in literary works.

In her third chapter, "The Sexual Revolution", Millett describes the revolutionary ideas of philosophers, critics and scholars who raised their voice for the welfare of women. In this section, she locates all the revolutionary notion in the span of hundred years, i.e. 1830-1930. Millett argues that it was the primary claim of sexual revolution to bring the immediate end of sexual inhibitions, and taboos; it demanded in particular what threaten patriarchal monogamous marriage: homosexuality, illegitimacy, adolescent and pre and extra-marital sexuality.

On the issue of education for women, she seems to have criticized philosophers and intellectuals like Rousseau who are of the view that the sole aim of women's education should be relative to men. In this reference, she also reads Alfred Tennyson's poem Princess where Ida protests against the patriarchal ideology which forbids higher education for women. She founds a university for women that might, Millett assumes, have been able to set a milestone in the way of the eradication of patriarchy. For a feminist literary critic, it is very significant to read selected literary texts from the period of sexual revolution. She reads Mill, Ruskin, Hardy, Tennyson and observes that it were Mill and Ruskin who had a definite stand to take for or against the sexual revolution, the other practitioners of the literature of the period appeared to be confused. Lynne Pearce may be cited in this reference:

Millett interprets this ambivalence as being due to the fact that writers were 'afraid, delighted and guilty' of the sexual revolution their works reflected, and because their response was not properly formulated theoretically, they were able to 'explore sexual politics at an inchoate primary level.'

Millett also reads the prominent Victorian novelists, particularly Hardy, Meredith and Charlotte Bronte. She argues that these novelists, despite the fact of their being confused and inconsistent, are enlightened in their

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portrayal of relationships between the sexes. Millett's reading of Hardy, according to Pearce, is the result of her own reading method. Pearce writes:

It must be said that the confusion Millett accredits to Hardy here can easily be seen as the result of her own reading method, which starting from the premise that literature is the reflection of the real world, is unable to decide how much or how little responsibility to give the author. Hardy may well have been ambivalent about his own response to the sexual revolution, but this does not disguise the fact that Millett's own reading position - part intentionalist, part mimetic—is equally unsure.\textsuperscript{128}

Again Beauvoir's influence on Millett can be viewed in her readings of Engels and Freud. On the one side, she applauds Engels for his Marxist-feminist position and denunciation of patriarchy in most of the walks of life; while on the other side, she denounces Freud for his male oriented approach and concepts like "penis envy". She is very critical of Freud for the pernicious sexual politics behind his theory: "The effect of Freud's work, that of his followers, and still more, that of his popularizers, was to rationalize the invidious relationship between the sexes, to ratify traditional roles, and to validate temperamental differences."\textsuperscript{129} Not only this, Millett also studies many counter revolutionary notions and laws inherent in the pervading social systems of several states like Nazi Germany, Soviet Union and Russia.

\textit{Sexual Politics} is widely known for its readings of Lawrence. Millett describes Lawrence as "the most talented and fervid of sexual politicians"\textsuperscript{130} whose patriarchal tendencies pass through five distinct phases: devotional, Oedipal, transitional, fraternal and ritualistic. Similarly, Millett reads Miller, Mailer and Genet to reveal the sexual politics and patriarchal domination. Pearce captures Millett's arena of critical thoughts in following words:

First, there is her analysis of patriarchy itself, which in categories she invents for its articulation ('ideology', 'class', 'force' etc.), provides the reader with a framework with which to approach any text, whether or not overtly patriarchal. Secondly, there are her own distinctive techniques for revealing

\textsuperscript{128} Ibid., p. 22.
\textsuperscript{129} Kate Millett, "The Counterrevolution", p. 178.
\textsuperscript{130} Ibid., "The Literary Reflection", p. 239.
these features in texts, including a decisive use of incriminating quotation, 'creative misreading' and the unproblematic identification of fictional characters with their authors. Finally . . . is her case of polemical rhetoric, which . . . produces a style of writing that dazzles and damns without compunction.\footnote{Lynne Pearce, p. 26.}

It may, therefore, be argued that Millett leaves no stone unturned in exploring, without noticing the appreciation or criticism of people, the sexual politics embedded in patriarchal society. She studies it on both the theoretical and the polemical grounds; she theorizes sexual double standards and male biased practices that patriarchy ensues and proves it by revealing and studying several instances from several literary texts.

**Critical Achievement**

Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics* sets a milestone in the history of feminism. All the later feminist critics acknowledge the debt they owe to her. In her ground-breaking treatise, Millett very brilliantly portrays the nature of power relationships between the sexes; surveys the fate of feminist struggle and its opponents in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; and displays how the sexual power-politics is enacted in the works of prominent practitioners of fiction writing like D.H. Lawrence, Henry Miller, Norman Mailer and Jean Genet. Perhaps, Millett is one of the first feminist critics to interpret a literary work in the light of feminist criticism which seems to have established a pattern for the later feminist critics, instructing them how to approach a literary text with feminist perspective. Toril Moi views *Sexual Politics* as mother of the later works of feminist criticism. She writes:

\begin{quote}
Its impact makes it the 'mother and precursor of all later works of feminists criticism in the Anglo-American tradition, and feminist of the 1970s and 1980s have never been reluctant to acknowledge their debt to, or disagreement with, Millett's path breaking essay.\footnote{Toril Moi, p. 24.}
\end{quote}

Moi argued that Millett's book also presented a challenge to New Criticism in its emphasis on close study and interpretation of social and cultural context in order to properly understand any literary text. Moi states:

\footnote{Lynne Pearce, p. 26.}
\footnote{Toril Moi, p. 24.}
Her criticism represented a striking break with the ideology of American New Criticism which at that time still retained a dominant position within the literary academy. In courageous opposition to New Critics, Millett argued that social and cultural context must be studied if literature was to be properly understood, a view she shares with all later feminist critics regardless of their otherwise differing interests.\textsuperscript{133}

Another significant aspect of Millett's criticism is her method of reading. She seems to break the conventional concept of reading a text. She not only resists author's intention but also occupies the position of an actual reader and boldly gives new dimensions of which the author himself could not surmise. Her reading of a text openly posits other perspectives of the text which is surprisingly different from the author's and displays how precisely the conflict or tension between the author/text and the reader can expose the underlying premises of a work. About her way of reading a text, to cite Toril Moi, will again be fruitful. She writes:

\begin{quote}
As a reader, Kate Millett is thus neither submissive nor lady-like: her style is that of a hard nosed street kid out to challenge the author's authority at every turn. Her approach destroys the prevailing image of the reader/critic as passive/feminine recipient of authoritarian discourse, and as such is exactly studied to feminism's political purposes.\textsuperscript{134}
\end{quote}

It is widely known that in a patriarchal world two very contrasting female pictures are conceived, created and presented. On one side, a woman is thought and represented in an ideal form; she is respected, worshiped and given a very dignified position in a man's world. While on the other side, she is presumed, in practical/real life, to be a passive being that is too dangerous for man. She is known and interpreted in terms of her sexuality. She is identified as passive, acquiescent, timid, emotional and conventional. Therefore, one purpose of Millett's critical endeavour seems to deliberate the female representation in the literary works of male authors. Millett notices and exposes that in the works of male authors a woman is commonly viewed and interpreted in terms of her sex. She reads Lawrence, Hardy and Miller

\textsuperscript{133} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{134} Ibid., pp. 24-25.
and points out that in the works of all the three writers, a woman is presented as a sexual object, and is interpreted as an erotic being. She exposes and describes all the factors (economic, social, cultural and psychological) that makes the female characters of the work to submit their person before the representative of the patriarchy and bears all the physical pains and mental agonies. Though critics like Lynne Pearce\(^{135}\) are critical of Millett’s idea that the novels she discussed in her book unconsciously reflect patriarchal society and showing that they are consciously critical of it, yet it helps Millett to forward her notion to resist author’s intention.

In the second chapter, ”Theories of Sexual Politics”, Millett has formulated in theory all the double standards, male biased practices that the institutions of patriarchy ensue. Millett writes: ”This second chapter, in my opinion is the most important in the book and far and away the most difficult to write, attempts to formulate a systematic overview of patriarchy as a political institution.”\(^{136}\) In the second part, that is, chapter three and four, she makes a historical study of the great transformation in the traditional relationship between men and women in the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. She gives an account of the climate of reaction which the twentieth century set in, assuming the continuation of a modified patriarchal way of life, and frustrating the possibility of revolutionary social change in this area for some three decades.

In New Statesman, Andrea Dworkin in his article on Millett, ”Great thinkers of our time- Kate Millett”, appreciates Millett, arguing that ”The world was sleeping and Kate Millett woke it up. Betty Freidan had written about the problem that had no name. Kate Millett named it, illustrated it, exposed it, analysed it.”\(^{137}\) Dworkin further says that Millett wanted to prove that sex is a status category with political implications. Millett speculates that sexual domination appears as the most pervasive ideology of European culture and provides its most pivotal concept of power. She accounts for patriarchy as a system of rule in a family where a man will rule a woman, and the elder man will rule the younger one: that is, ”The male was the figure of action, even heroism. He alone was made in God’s image. He ruled in religion, marriage and politics as conventionally understood. His sovereign place as head of the family was unchallenged.”\(^{138}\)

Millett describes the construction of a woman as a result of a process of socialization in which women are constrained to be passive, ignorant, valued if at all for bearing children, a function shared with animal;

\(^{135}\) Lynne Pearce, p. 46.

\(^{136}\) Kate Millett, ”Preface”, Sexual Politics, p. xix.

\(^{137}\) Andrea Dworkin, ”Great thinkers of our times — Kate Millett”, New Statesman (July 14, 2003), p. 7.

\(^{138}\) Ibid.
men were distinguished by the distinctly human characteristics. It is significant to notice that Millett appears to bear some similarity with Simone de Beauvoir when she describes woman as a pure construct of civilization. She is also of the opinion that women are socialized in a manner to accept the superiority of men and their inferiority, which was justified on the ground of male biological superiority. Patriarchy, according to her, seems to be inevitably derived from the superior physical strength of the males. But Millett went on to hypothesize a civilization that was pre-patriarchy; if this civilization existed, she argues, then male strength could not be the signature reason for patriarchy. She finds the biases in gender roles as socially determined and ideologically reinforced by master-sex dominance.

Very much like her predecessors Virginia Woolf and Simone de Beauvoir, Kate Millett has described the economics of sexual politics. She has shown how women have worked for less or no money which helped to keep women under the way of men. She has also talked about the use of force against women, including the phenomena of compulsory pregnancy and rape. She has also analysed the role of state and legal systems in various societies, in maintaining the status of women subordinate and marginalized. She has claimed the misogynist literature to be the primary vehicle of masculine hostility which reinforces the inferior status of women.

Millett has also touched all the spheres traversed by her predecessors, to show the secondary position of women but her methodology was new. Backing her arguments from the fields of anthropology, sociology, economics and history, she finds the meaning of sexual politics and sexual power in literature. Talking about her contribution to the field of criticism, Andrea Dworkin writes: "She eschewed prior schools of literary criticism and declared her own criticism a "mutation"," Dworkin quotes Millett in this context : "I have operated on the premise that there is room for a criticism which takes into account the larger cultural context in which literature is conceived and produced." 139

Kate Millett demonstrates in her very new and own way the vicious circle of sexuality and power politics which is well intricated in human behavior and governing the Society. About Millett’s achievement and contribution to the field of feminism Dworkin writes:

I cannot think of anyone who accomplished what Kate Millett did, with this one book. It remains the alpha and omega of the women's movement. Everything that feminists have done is foreshadowed, predicted or encouraged by Sexual Politics. 140

139 Ibid.
140 Ibid.
So with this single book Millett has created a distinguished position for herself in the realm of feminism, as she herself writes: "My feminist classic" had become a radical text, dubious, "far out", a risky proposition".141

141 Kate Millett, "Introduction to the Illinois Paperback", *Sexual Politics*, p. XI.