

Tribhuvan University

Subversion of Gender Relation in Shobhaa De's *Surviving Men: The Smart Woman's  
Guide to Staying on Top*

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This thesis entitled “Subversion of Gender Relation in Shobhaa De’s *Surviving Men: The Smart Woman’s Guide to Staying on Top*” submitted to the Central Department of English T.U. Kirtipur by Mr. Dinesh Bahadur Kumal has been approved by the undersigned members of the research committee.

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## **Abstract**

This thesis demonstrates that the gender crisis by questioning long established gender norms and behaviours in Shobhaa De's *Surviving Men: The Smart Woman's Guide to Staying on Top*. This study explores not only the subversion of gender role, but also reflects the shifting gender relationship. This study is to bring feminist discourse with hegemonic representation of women, critical analysis and establishing the importance of women's role in the society. Moreover, De uses the power of fiction to criticize dominant patriarchal structures by questioning and subtly reversing patriarchal discourses to serve a feminist cause. My investigation into potential to overcome traditional conceptions of gender roles is based on theoretical ideas on sex, gender, power and sexuality put forward by the 20th century scholars Michael Foucault and Judith Butler. According to Foucault, power always produces and therefore encounters resistance, and in this sense literature can be seen as a warning sign of and interference to a long era of suppression fostered by patriarchal structures and its institutional arrangements of power. This thesis is Foucault's and Butler's assumption of the constructedness and hence flexibility of gender identities in the analysis of gender subversion.

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## I. Introducing Shobhaa De and her idea of Subversion

This research primarily focuses to the persistence and prevalence of gender inequality and to critique the limitation of gender role and patriarchy on Shobhaa De's *Surviving Men: The Smart Woman's Guide to Staying on Top* (1997). Through careful scrutiny it seeks to understand how literature disrupts gender roles that limit access to equality or happiness for either female or male characters. A feminist reading entails paying attention to the small details that can reveal to the reader the ways gender is performed. Examining the hidden or implied relationship between a characters and her (or his) gender expresses the cultural values embedded in the work.

*Surviving Men* is genuinely and extremely a feminist literary work of art exploring the genuine and basic female concern, their pain and desires, suffering, confronting and conflicting within certain theoretical, conceptual and structural assumption and framework of the tends of western feminism. The disruption of the traditional feminine gender role in this work helps to dislodge the category of woman from its domestic associations. By carrying out this research, this researcher make a point that De's narrative can be interpreted as feminist because she ultimately disrupts gender conventions.

Shobhaa De is an Indian Woman novelist writing in English and a regular columnist and editor of different popular magazines. In her columns and novels, she explores the theme of overpowering materialism, lack of spirituality and resulting inner conflict. She raises voice against male supremacy and attempts to place women in the position of men. She has written many novels and columns. Her writings attempt to place women in independent and autonomous existence. She pleads for improving the

condition of women in the society. She believes in the balance of power between men and women in her writing. She wishes that neither men nor women should be given extreme power to be exercised. She has clearly given her views on love, marriage, sex, culture, and religion through her writing. She has acted as a forerunner of the modern day feminist by depicting the worldwide domination, corruption, oppression of women by male through her book and columns.

*Surviving Men* is based on female concern, their pain and suffering, comforting and conflicting with every kind of suppression. This book has been interpreted differently by male and female. Male who wants to know what exactly a woman could think of him, and a woman who wants to know what exactly goes on in a man's mind. The author being a woman analysis score of men, before putting down these hard hitting facts but all said and done, it still stands to be her opinion and not the final word on men. Her analysis on men and their money, men and their moms, men in love, all seem grossly exaggerated in several parts of *Surviving Men*. Shobhaa De compares men with dogs; they are scorned at, ridiculed, chided, and at times caressed. But the sexist tones never sound dull or boring. She deals with people trapped in loveless marriage, smug selfish husbands, engaging in ill-fated extramarital affairs, and uses wives more for social respectability than love, sexual obsession, changing traditional concept of sex and love marriage in her writing.

De has written her book in different circumstances with different picture of women's life. She has also included the hardships of life, struggle, domination, suppression and difficulties of women characters. She finds wives suppressed by their husbands and sisters domination by their brothers in the society. Such condition of the

society aroused in her bitter feelings against such males. She has taken most of female characters shown their and revolt against the patriarchal society. She blurs the traditional norms and values and thinks of patriarchy, traditional concept of sex and love marriage in her writing.

Moreover, not limiting herself only to social issues and sexual matters highly erotic sexual exploration or gay and lesbian relation, she even linguistically overrides the barring of using pornography and vulgar assaults in her novels and columns. It even evidence her subverting and disregarding the so long tradition of literary history and literary canon; i.e. getting beyond literary conventions. Being a feminist, she is able to establish and construct her own way of expression, language and thought. Regarding the major techniques and issues in Shobhaa De's writings, A.G. Khan sees a kind of protest and liberation in the issue of pornography and vulgar assaults as in their pure native Hindi. He opines:

A beedi – smoking, pan chewing illustrate vegetable/fish seller how live abuses in background and dirty; her sophisticated counterpart smokes cigarette, sips Vodka and uses all English tore letter words (in addition to the India uses) non-chalantantly because she is not only a celebrity but cultured. Whenish a creative woman writer rephrases an expression like ‘a rose in rose is a rose’ into ‘a fuck is a fuck, she lends literary charm to it.

(33)

These lines show how pre-assumed and so called unconventional ways of expression have been made possible and conventional. But at the same time, contrary to own previous elaboration Khan himself accuses Shobhaa De's writing of having no any

literary excellence. He further says: “The phenomenal success of Shobhaa De’s thrash is attributed to generation of puppies and Guppies (Punjabi and Gujrati Guppies) aged between 15 and 35, a new whole generation which has money, leisure and sense of desertion” (34). Agreeing with the contestation of Khan, it seems to be a kind of protest and search for liberation but her verbalized word “Khana Peena aur Dena (sleeping with men)” full of sexual, vulgar and erotic words which do not convince the reader much.

Furthermore, Anita Myles views Shobhaa De’s book *Surviving Men*. She asserts:

It has been described as sassy provocation to offend. The book deals with man in general and the Bombay variety in particular. But the novelist deals admits that it compasses universal male attitude of late Shobhaa De has began to emphasize that is a men women relationship it is not the women alone to be blamed for the probable also lies with man.

Apparently, surviving men may appear to be harsh at deep down, it reflects the shifting gender relationship not only in India but in much of Asia as well. The Indian women may not be endowed with complete freedom. (103-04)

These lines refer to the dominant patriarchal ideology and raise the problem of gender inequality and traumatic experience of female in Indian society. Nisha Trivedi sees a kind of protest in De’s writing. She opines:

The explicit transparent life of modern Indian who is at the centre of fiction of Shobhaa De is no longer a model of Vedic or Pre-Vedic dignified woman, nor is she modeled on the post Aryan woman who is passive in nature and accepts the dominance of men in society. Born in the

era of women's liberation, they are to certain extent an extension of woman based on mythic models from the Ramayana and Puranas.

Modeled on Sita, Savitri and Gandhari become shy, gentle as a person pure and faithful as wife and selfless loving and thoughtful as mother.

(104)

The modern Indian women becomes bold and capable of surviving in degrading moral values of life, they are humiliation as far as their social, economic and cultural life, but they also find themselves capable of struggling, compromising and realizing their existence.

Gender is an umbrella term; typically it refers to the social process of dividing up people and social practices along the lines of sexed identities and this is the era of subverting these notions of gender roles. The system of gender divides human into two categories male and female and it privileges the male over the female in the societies and that dichotomy of hierarchies is under question as a subversion of elitist structures. The way of dividing up people is very old which we can trace back in the ancient Greek period. The renowned philosophers of the world in general and the Greek philosopher Aristotle in particular in his work *Economics* states that "Men were stronger, women weaker; men courageous, women cautious; men educate children; women nurture them" (qtd. in Anne 2). There is always a dominant category in the description of male/female. As the recognizable history of human civilization began, either it be during Greek era to the recent highly intellectualized and advanced scientific period of modernism and postmodernism, human civilization is pervasively and dominantly patriarchal, that is, it is male-centered and male-oriented. Since antiquity, the human settlement has been so

structured and Simone De Beauvoir conducted that women are treated as subordinate, second class, inferior and 'other' with respect to males. Such bias notions influenced each and every cultures, Shobhaa De's book *Surviving Men* in which she has created rigid notions for the women becomes objects, she writes; "Men worry about their careers like women worry about their –no, not housekeeping money – but future security. The two are interlinked. The more men worry the more insecure his wives" (15). Patriarchal ordeals not only keep women abide by economic, social, political, religious, intellectual and literary position and possibilities, rather even greatly they have been compelled to suffer and tolerate corruption and exploitation caused by patriarchy. Binaries have been constructed and mechanized since primitivism, in which so called inferior and derogative attitude have been acknowledged and identified with women. As stated by Simone de Beauvoir in her masterpiece *The Second Sex* cultural prominence of difference between, masculine and feminine what ascribes and widely identifies "Masculinity as active, rational, corollary, feminine as passive timid, emotional, conventional, beautiful and kind also played an active catalyst for such a suppression and discrimination" (301). The purpose behind the cultural construction of gender as masculine and feminine is to maintain the rule of male in society and to dominate female. Regarding this cultural construction of gender differences Louis Tyson verifies of not the natural conception but as the man made she writes:

Feminist don't deny the biological difference between men and women: in fact many feminist, celebrate those differences but they don't agree that such difference as physical size and body chemistry make man naturally superior to women: for example, more intelligent, more logical, more

courageous or better beater leaders. Feminism therefore distinguishes between the word sex, which refers to our biological constitution as word gender which refers to our cultural programming as feminine or masculine which are categories created by society rather than by nature. (84)

In this cultural construction of gender difference, the pioneer feminist critic Simone De Beauvoir in the *Second Sex* (1949) says that a woman is constructed differently by men. They are made and regulated to be submissive kind, loving passive and inferior. Here Beauvoir insists against the myth of women. She says: “Women are a being routed in nature but not therefore assailable as other in nature” (91). She believes such binaries and hierarchies are not biologically and genetically inherited but culturally established. Men view women as objects of desire and as property to exchange. Marriage merely transfers the proprietarily rights from one to the other. In the text *Surviving Men*, I find gender as a stable signifier. Focusing on fallacy of sex and gender serves to break down the binary relations inherent in talking about genders. Through her book, Shobhaa De wants to bring forth actual position of male dominated women and makes them aware. De asserts:

Listen guys, this chapter may embarrass you. If you'd like to skip it – go ahead. Actually, it's rather a humiliating one. I mean – you think you have been dealing with this book manfully because you have been reading it and saying to yourself, ‘Oh man. Men turn to the bottle all else fails. Alcohol is the answer to all the problems. And since the poor guys are denied the release public tears [...] they drink.’ Women handle grief more sensibly. They beat their breasts, they wail, they cry, ... they punish themselves. (28-29)

Furthermore, Susan Lee Johnson points to the study of gender as potentially empowering for anyone thwarted by conventions. She writes:

Gender is relation of difference and domination constructed such that it appears natural in day-to-day life. The West is historically a place of disrupted gender relations and stunning racial and ethnic diversity, a diversity structured by inequality and injustice. So studying gender in the west holds promise for the project of denaturalizing it from its comfortable mooring in other relation of domination from small town racism to worldwide imperialism. (499)

These lines refer to the goal of denaturalizing gender and disrupted gender relations and stunning racial and ethnic diversity, a diversity structured by inequality and injustice.

Feminist concern is about the implicit binaries found in our culture. In her 2002 essay "Pedagogy of the Opaque," Shally Robinson describes how binary thinking also limits available gender roles to men. She writes: "The oppressors/oppressed paradigm limits what can be learned about masculinity because it sets up a binary relation between the empowered and the disempowered that reproduces the same narrative regardless of historical or cultural context" (142). Seeking a new gender paradigm works to expand understanding of both women and men's roles and the limitation of strict categorization. Feminism involves any challenge to dominant patriarchal ideology. Feminism focuses on social change of everyday patriarchy which is supported by its institutional and legal discrimination like domestic violence, sexual abuse, rape, dowry deaths, institutional practices etc. it begins with the situation of the ordinary women in a particular place and

history. It is the particular study of working of gender and patriarchy in concrete cultural context.

Feminism is a distinctively conceptual field of criticism and theory that started in the decade of 1960. In a broader level, feminism is literary, political, social and economical, theoretical and conceptual discourse developed after 1960, advocating for the basic individual rights and freedom of the female in the different areas of social, economical, political, cultural, religious, intellectual and literary. Moreover it seeks to eliminate and eradicate the subordination, oppression, exploitation and suppression. Victimization and injustice exercised upon women whom they suffer of their cultural construct of sex and gender difference.

As the recognizant history of human civilization began, either it be during Greek era to the recent highly intellectualized and advanced scientific period. Human civilization is pervasively and dominantly patriarchal, that is, male centered, male – oriented. Since antiquity the human settlement has been so structured and conducted that women are graded and treated as subordinate, second class, inferior and “other” with respect to males. So, Simone De Beauvoir says, “One is not born, but rather becomes a woman ... it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature ... this is described as feminine” (89). She believes such binaries and hierarchies are not biologically and genetically inherited but culturally established.

Similarly, another political feminist critic Kate Millet in *Sexual Politics* emphasizes on the issue of gender which has twin poles, ‘biology’ and ‘culture’. For Millet, patriarchy is the significant cause of women’s domination. She analyzes “western

social arrangements and institutions as covert ways of manipulating the dominance of men and the subordination of women” (238). Millet argues:

In all known societies the relationship between the sexes has been based on power and that they are therefore political. This power takes the forms of males domination over women in all areas of life, sexual domination is universal so ubiquitous and so complete that it appear ‘natural’ and hence becomes invisible so that it is perhaps the most pervasive ideology of our culture and provides in most fundamental concept of power. (25)

Millet’s *Sexual Politics* marked an important stage in political feminist writing on literature. She used the term ‘patriarchy’ to describe the cause of women’s oppression. Patriarchy subordinates the female as inferior to male.

Critics like Elian Showalter, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar question the cultural, sexual, intellectual, psychological, and such a stereotype and myths about women and their literature. Recapitulating, feminism targets to combat and destroy all the foundations of society, all the institutional practices that are pervasively patriarchal and reaffirm and committ themselves for basic individual rights, liberty and freedom of women. Behind it however, lie two centuries of struggle for the recognition of women’s cultural role and achievement and for women’s social, political and cultural rights marked by publication of such books as Marry Wollstonecraft’s *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), John Stuart Mill’s *The Subjection of Women* (1869), Virginia Woolf’s *A Room of One’s Own* (1920), Simone De Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex* (1949) and many more.

But after 1960, in the aftermath of women's liberation movement the basic assumptions of feminism have widened and broaden its thematic concern. It has rather gained and achieved whatever their earlier long legal and political struggles had been fighting for. They now get beyond the basic and prime theatrical and conceptual framework of feminism. Now they are not only directing their concentration to socio-economic, political, legal cultural rights and inclusiveness. Feminism switched its focus from attacking male version of the world as they are able to get access over what they demanded in their emancipatory manifestos, to exploring the nature of the female world and outlook, and reconstructing the lost or suppressed records of female experiences. Now they have stated to conceive and understand the world and universe around them through their own eyes. Some feminists and critics even go for the establishment of their own means of language and expression extremely boycotting male conventions and formations. Now they are longing for the establishment of their own subjectivity, self identity and self discovery. This is truly made possible in the so –called western and developed societies due to the rise of industrialization, scientific and mathematics innovations, globalization and technological proliferations. It is obvious to say that the basic feminine concern like physical and domestic violence, sexual harassment or confinement within the four walls of a house have been long outdated and eliminated in these advanced societies. So, the feminine concerns during and after 1960s have been much more directed towards not only to socio-political equality and liberty, but to the prime dominance and control over the economical and physical.

In consideration to literature and creative writings, their attention was switched to decanonize the literary canon and constructing of their own. Regarding literary creation

and criticism, a number of feminists have concerned with female as a reader, writer, critic and producer in all aspects and in different genres of writing including journals and letters. Similarly, the radical claims of many feminist theorists and thinkers are that all western languages, in all their features, are utterly and unchangeably male-engendered, male-constructed and male-dominated. So, it is essential to take an initiative to construct their own language that will not appropriate into the so-called phallogentric language.

De's writing is especially on the bases of gender discrimination, economic crisis, and traditional belief, social and cultural disorder in her feminist concern. She has challenged male for their exploitation and domination over women and assaulted on orthodox patriarchs for focusing their politics of power to suppress women in the society. The domination of men over women and their attitudes to them stimulated her to protest against it through her writing.

This study is to bring feminist discourse of resistance, by unveiling hegemonic representation of women, and by attempting a critical analysis of gender binaries. De exposes the disruption of gender roles and how she advocates for female upliftment. She raises feminist voice as feminist issues and wants to establish female gender equal to male in society. Patriarchy is one of the most dominant, dangerous and far-reaching structures of domination and subordination, as feminist claims, that all persists in each aspect of the socio-cultural practices. But thinkers and writers, the feminist in particular are active to subvert the submissive structure of the patriarchy. Literature has been produced for arising voice against the submission.

## II. Subversion of Gender Relation in Shobhaa De's *Surviving Men: The Smart Woman's Guide to Staying on Top*

This study seeks to prove how Shobhaa De has subverted gender roles in her non-fiction *Surviving Men* through her narration. Women are always relegated from the mainstream position and are featured uncivilized, barbaric, docile, irrational, submissive, and meek in literature. Men desire to prolong to such discriminating hierarchical order.

Disruption of the gender role can be defined as the way of changing the belief and attitude towards patriarchal society. It indirectly tries to destroy the authority of political, economical, religious and social norms and values in relation with gender definition. De has also tried to destroy the patriarchal system and establish the female rights, freedom and the position as male. Men dominated and exploited women in the name of social norms and values. Women were not only marginalized but they were suppressed culturally and ideologically. It was inevitable to break such system and ideology.

De describes the Indian patriarchal society in her non-fiction *Surviving Men*. This book suggests women to go against patriarchal system and get rid of male made rules and regulation of patriarchal society. De presents the male and female's behavior and attitudes in her book. In the primitive Indian society men dominate over women and kept them in the kitchen as house servant. Such men and women relation is justify the following lines; "All the department of house was women's. You handle it" (123). So, it was inevitable to break such system and ideology to emancipate women from the corrupted society. Women are powerless and dominated culturally, politically and economically. Women were exploited mentally and physically too.

De in her self-help book highlights attempts to find ways by which women can survive and cope in the world that's cruel to them. She clarifies however that her brand of feminism is not only about women getting up but fighting for their rights. And she has that in order to train a man to any level of competence; "women should use: a) "food, b) sex, c) food and sex" (236). And also De asserts: "men are supposed to pay for, everything. Women serve their husband regular 'khaana, peena, deena,' hot meals, cold beverages and sex-on-demand" (264). The erotic content of her book has been somewhat controversial. De in her non-fiction suggests breaking sexual taboos and putting forth candidly what women always felt but were too afraid and inhibited to show.

Conversely she realizes that this aspect of female sexuality is still hurtful to men as, it could mean women talking about being bored with their husbands sexually, mentally or spiritually. She recommends a mature attitude to sex wherein it should be something special, something shared something beautiful. Most of the time however, De highlights the futility of this emotional surrender because of patriarchal norms to reciprocate. De has shown the Indian family condition, men work at office and women work at home women spent their life slaving for men, washing their husbands clothes, preparing food. Women contribute equally to family. Men command respect merely by being inborn; women have serious self-doubts about their eligibility for a place in the human race. Gender issue and feminisms are interrelated but feminism subverts the conventional gender role. Mohini Chatterjee writes; "As a mother, sister, daughter or wife, the role of the women the development of a human being's personality in particular and the growth and progress of society in general, cannot be either denied or undervalued" (iv). According to her, but for centuries, man, that is the male of the species

has kept the female under his thumb, allowing her own development to stagnate. She argues that male treated her like property and she lived her life under the domination of her man; even she was ill-treated, abused or tortured. De asserts: “Women did not have to host or attend cocktail parties for reason of business- their husbands business. They didn’t have to go high profile events either socially; they had a marginal role to play. They were just wives and were expected to look and act like well ... wives” (265). These lines refer that the women had to follow a fairly route to make a success of their life. Women treated as third grade citizen or nonhuman beings. They did not have speaking rights. De argues conversation was restricted to uttering ‘haanji or really ji.’ Women were vulnerable docile obedient and weak in the male made society or patriarchal society. The women’s position and power are marginalized in patriarchal society. In the patriarchal society male dominate over female. On the other hand, Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, in their work *The Mad Women in the Attic (1980)*, discredit the literary stereotypes of women. The male tendency of creating images about women is deconstructed by women. Female are represented as powerless objects and given no prestigious position. They are shown in literature as they are to be suited the male ideology. In this way, the masculine culture has come to be identified as active, dominating, adventurous, rational, creative space where as the feminine by systematic opposition to such traits, has come to be identified as passive, timid, emotional and conventional. They assert:

Before the woman writer can journey through the looking glass towards literary autonomy ... she must come to terms with the images on the surface of the glass, with that those mythic masks male artists have fastened over her human face [...] a women writer must examine,

assimilate and transcend the extreme “Images of angles and monster”  
which male authors have granted for her. (596)

Gilbert and Gubar are of the opinion that the true self of women has never got space in literary domain. Images such as “angle” and “monster” always kill female creativity, and women must kill aesthetic ideal through which they themselves have been killed into art before women can write. They express their anxiety, “the images of angle and monster have been so ubiquitous throughout literature by men that they have also pervaded women’s writing to such an extent that few women have definitely killed figure” (597). They argue, “Throughout most male literature, women are portrayed as a sweet heroine inside the house and a vicious bitch outside” (604).

Patriarchy is thus, by which promotes the belief that a woman is innately inferior to men. This belief is the inborn inferiority of woman called biological essentialism because it is based on biological differences between the sexes that are considered as a part of our essence. In fact many feminists celebrate these differences but they do not agree that such differences of physical size, shape and the body chemistry make man naturally superior to woman for courageous or better leadership. Feminism distinguishes between the word ‘sex’ which refers to our biological being as female or male and the word ‘gender’ which refers to our cultural programming as feminine or masculine, which categories are thought to be created by society rather than by nature. Talking about the traditional gender role that is imposed on woman, an American critic Louis Tyson says:

A woman who has internalized that norms and values of patriarchy, which can be defined in short, in any culture that privileges men by promoting traditional gender roles cast men as rational, strong, protective and

decisive day, cast women as emotional, weak, nurturing and submissive. These gender roles have been used very successfully to justify such inequalities which still occur today as excluding women from equal to leadership and decision position. (83-84)

Tyson clearly says that gender is the construction of the culture. It promotes men as strong and women as weak in every aspect of their lives.

De has brought many modes issues: political, religious, social, economical and cultural norms and values. She has also presented the freedom rights and patriarchal culture through her book. Most of her non-fiction generally shows male made culture; male as powerful, self-dependent, but she subverts the gender roles. She goes against the so called male dominated society by giving the suggestion to women about patriarchal norms and values and dismisses the whole business with a grunt. She asserts: “Get out or fuck off the patriarchal values” (60). Shobhaa De treatment whether equality and freedom for women can occur in society as it is currently structured or whether a radical transformation is required.

Women want to be, as Mohini Chatterjee write, “treated like equals and though they were laughed at, reviled, criticized and even physically attacked for making such demand, they prevailed. Unfortunately, women’s human rights has been not gained, or awarded all over the world. There are some dark corners where women are still kept in a state of subjugation.” (ibid iv). Obviously, the structure of subjugation is still dominant. Therefore, for a long period of time, to quote Mohini Chatterjee again; “Men are producers and women consumers. This perception has persisted for ages and still broadly alive” (1) and “History, as a record of male leadership, has been used, perhaps

subconsciously, to reinforce the idea that women are insignificant and subordinate and therefore belong to the private sphere” (15).

Within the increasing awareness globally, men also have raised the voice against injustice on women. The great figure of the world has advocated for the rights and equal treatment to the female Mahatma Gandhi states:

“Woman is the companion of the man gifted with equal mental capacities. She has the right to participate in the minutest details of the activities of man, and she has same rights of freedom and liberty as he.... By sheer force of vicious custom, even the most ignorant and worthless men have been enjoying a superiority over women which they do not deserve and ought not to have” (quoted in Agrawal and Rao xii).

These lines refer to men and women are equal. They are two sides of a coin. Women have the right to participate in the minutest details of the activities of men, and women have same rights of freedom and liberty as he.

Shobhaa De focuses on the value of women in each sector of society by opposing the structures of domination and subordination of the rigid patriarchy. Shobhaa De writes:

Women have been defined in various ways, but it is agreed that it encompasses a set of belief, values, and attributes centered on the high valuation of women as human beings. Women are not valued for attributes imposed on us by others, but for those that exist in and are chosen by women. We reject negative cultural images of women and affirm our

strength, capability, and intelligence. We value autonomy, and we work for condition that favors our independent control of our destinies. (87)

Shobhaa De's ambition to maintain and create this innermost subjective human essence in women are expressed and preserved in the concept of autonomy. Everyone is free to fulfill her or his desires and needs that individual freedom identifiable with the choice of self activity and subjectivity of person. Shobhaa De focuses her views on autonomy and says:

The preservation of human essence in women ... it is also concept of struggle which was developed to demonstrate that the women wanted to separate form mixed male dominated organizations and from their autonomous organization, with their own analysis, programs and methods. (40-41)

The focus of women is on individual change and self-fulfillment; for others, the role of female lies in collective efforts and shared goals.

The prominent feminist Mary Poovey argue that the stereotypes and attitudes formulated in writing by men that reinforced devaluation of women's lives, depicting women as angles, most be revalued. She writes:

Despite the claims that the terms man and mankind were representative of all human beings, that is, early proponents of women's studies argued that the knowledge commonly assumed to describe what counted as knowledge was actually limited to the activities generally performed by men. Thus history usually concern itself with wars, politics, wage labour, not with domestic relations, philanthropy or housework, ... because man

had written almost all of the great, works on, universal themes like war, heroism and territorial expansion, while women writers had confined themselves to, inferior, subjective like marriage and domesticity. (135)

Feminist concern is that the most important obstacle to a woman's freedom was not her biology, or the political or the legal constraints placed upon her or even her economic situations; rather it was the process by which femininity is manufactured in society.

Simone De Beauvoir in her famous work *The Second Sex* (1949) argued: "women could lead in depended, rationally ordered and autonomous lives once they were freed from artificially restricting myths and cultural assumption" (88). She here implies that only by denying her femaleness that women can achieve humanity, and devalues traditionally female qualities, such as nurturing. De Beauvoir's theory of woman as "Other" and as a social construction, laid the groundwork for the later development of gender studies. Drawing from de Beauvoir's concept of gender as a social construction, the academic study of gender came out of the second wave of the feminist movement in the 1960s-1970s. Feminist scholars began asking how biological sex differences related to the social construction of gender, and most importantly, what was stake in the demarcation of "masculine" and "feminine." The theorists concluded that "the actual physical mental effects of biological differences had been exaggerated to maintain a patriarchal system of power and to create a consciousness among women that they were naturally better suited to 'domestic' roles," feminist scholars argued that women were defined by their sex as primarily reproducers of children, and were consequently kept out of the work force, which prevented them from achieving economic independence,

feminist arguing that social construction of gender and economic dependence on men restricts women's roles to that of housewife and mother.

Shobhaa De disagrees about the traditional gender role of women. She writes; "A change, with aggression not submissiveness being as a desirable attribute. Today's young women who pay their own bills for own earned money" (78). Women, as such; it is based firmly on women's own experience and perceptions and sees no need to compromise with exiting political perspective and agendas. The theory of gender as a social construction, scholars of history and literature began examining their respective academic fields to discover how gender thinking manifested in the historical record and the literary canon. Talking about feminist theory, Valerie Bryson forwards her radical thought. She states:

It sees the oppression of women as most fundamental and universal form of domination, and its aim is to understand and end this [...] women as a group have interests opposed to those men, these interests unite them in common sisterhood that transcends the division of class that women should struggle to achieve their liberation. (181)

The major interests of feminism critics have been to reconstitute all the ways that deal with literature so as to do justice to female points of view, concerns and values. Many feminist critics have described the literature written by men for its depiction of women as marginal, docile and subservient to man's interest and emotional needs and fears. Such feminist studies have served to raise the status of many female authors hitherto more or less scanted by critics and to bring into preview other authors who have been largely overlooked as subject for serious consideration.

Women broke years of silence to discover the shared nature of problems. They thought that women should struggle to achieve their own liberation. Many radical feminists ponder over that the basic of women's oppression lies not in social organization or physical domination, but in male control of culture, religion, language and knowledge that limits the ways in which we can think and cause patriarchal assumption to internalize by women as well as men. Women's subordination was no longer based on physical necessity only; it is not only thing preventing women from seeing themselves as subject in their own right was the artificial idea of womanhood engendered by society which still saw women as secondary objects, acquiring meaning only in relation to men. If women were to be free, they must therefore, be freed from this prevailing idea, and persuaded to take responsibility for their own lives rather than accepting the security of dependences or the bad faith represented by conformity to the feminine idea. Shobhaa De here implies that only by denying her femaleness that women can achieve humanity and devalues traditionally female qualities. Shobhaa De has challenged the claims of philosophy and political theory to embody reason and universality arguing that women are based on a male paradigm that ignores or devalues experiences and ways of thinking associated with women, so that objectivity in fact, the subjective perception of men.

Masculinity is associated with quality such as light, reason, and activity whereas femininity is with passivity and emotion. Woman's subordination was no longer on physical necessity, the only thing preventing woman from seeking themselves as subject in their own right was the artificial idea of womanhood engendered by society, which still saw women as secondary objects, acquiring meaning only in relation to men. If women to be free, they must therefore, be freed from this dominating idea. The aim of Shobhaa De

was to reveal the constructed nature of womanhood. De argued that women could lead independent, rationally ordered and autonomous lives once they were freed from culture restricting myths. She here implies that denying the femaleness and women should achieve humanity. De believes that changes in education, women are to be free. She writes; “What is certain that hitherto women’s possibilities have been supposed ... to humanity and that is high time, she is permitted to take her chances in her own interest and in the interest all” (184). It showed that women could make choices they could reject their traditional roles.

De talks about woman without waving a feminist flag. Her high voltage career happened in unexpected ways. She claims: “I was not a careerist. So many years later; I still don’t consider myself one” (xvi). Women were to be free; they must therefore, be freed from the patriarchal idea, and persuaded to take responsibility for their own lives, rather than accepting the security of dependence or bad faith represented by conformity to the feminine ideas.

Present day feminists think that women’s problems were shared and they could only be ended by collected political action. A new theory and strategy for women’s liberation could only be based on women’s shared experience, not on abstracted speculation. Judith Butler says:

Women are oppressed lass. Our operation is total, affecting every facet of our lives. We are exploited as sex objects breeders, domestic servants and cheap labour. We are considered inferior beings whose only purpose is to enhance men’s lives ... we identify the agents of our oppression as men. Male supremacy is the oldest most basic form of domination ... all men

receives economic, sexual, and psychological benefits from male supremacy. (598)

A central message of this must be that is not unjust laws of economic system that are responsible for women's oppression but men, that men as a group have interests opposed to those women and that it is therefore against the power of men that the battle must be fought. The feminist theory not only unveils the male oppression over female, their control of private as well as public life of female race but it also asserts female individuality and consolidate their voice against patriarchy.

A much more radical criticism launched by Adriene Rich in her essay "notes towards a politics of location" (1980), forwards her radical view about feminism. She asserts:

... the common oppression of women around the gathering movement of women around the globe, the hidden history of women's resistance and bounding, the failure of all previous politics to recognize the universal shadow of patriarchy, the belief that women now, in a time of rising consciousness and global emergency may join across all national cultural boundaries to create a society free of domination, in which sexuality, politics, work, intimacy, thinking itself will be transformed. (637)

Rich here insists on creating a society without domination, subjugation and marginalization. She, similarly, argues that when women come up with a single voice they will be declined in patriarchal power.

She does not see patriarchy as unchanging and monolithic structure of oppression, but allow for the possibility that patriarchal power may be challenged and feminist may get victories. Emergence of feminist critics in the western countries remapped the male

dominated critical terrain. They began to developed systematically a self conscious theory with the realization that women should struggle together to achieve their own liberation, they came up with the slogan that “the personal is political” and that a new theory and strategy for women’s liberation could only be based on women’s experience, not on abstract speculation.

Shobhaa De’s ambitions to maintain and create this innermost subjective human essence in women are expressed and preserved in the concept of autonomy. Everyone is free to fulfill her or his desires and needs that individual freedom identifiable with the choice of self activity and subjectivity of the person. The role of women in society is cultural construct because female infants do not know what they are: they are just clay and it is the society which shapes them as females. However, it is not an easy task to remove the deep rooted structure of society. It has taken a long time to realize and establish women identity. The feminist view is that since women are equal participants in social construction, they should be indeed not treated as outcasts. So, feminism aimed to end the notion that one’s biological sex is superior or inferior to the other. Due to the bios notions imposed in the name of normative roles to women, various forms of studies and critical discourses have been evolved.

De’s writing establishes women selfhood and autonomy in the patriarchal society. She obviously believes that Indian women have changed qualitatively, are a part of the modern world, and ready for the new millennium. De states; “I bring in as much money as he does. I work equally long hours. I hate it when he offers to help” (xvii). There seem many concepts about selfhood and autonomy in the feminist movement. Nevertheless, the most common concept among feminist is ‘individual woman’ or the

right to individual choice. The individualistic sense of uniqueness and self consciousness which people do not share to some extent is wide spread. Self is inseparable from the network of kingship relation and social boundaries.

Women can achieve the equality in male made society. But the Indian male is still trapped by history and refusing to be shaken out of this torpor. This imbalance deals a major blow to the institution of marriage. Hitherto it had provided for society's need for love, security and children, but in the fictional world it is not regarded as essential. In a country where women rarely bare more than two inches of leg and hardly ever file for divorce. De asserts: "Home is security, permanency stability aspects of domesticity that are anathema to men. Women dream about perfect home with good plumbing and at least one solid steel almirah to store the gold in. Home means everything to women" (131).

Feminism is against the long been dominated patriarchal values and bias normative notions imposed on women in the name of culture or values. Feminism is an intervention on long been dominated patriarchy and subversive consciousness has been discovered and used against the hegemony of patriarchy. It examine the ways in which literature reinforces or undermines the economic, political, social and psychological oppression of women by seeking female identity and by raising the voices against patriarchal gender roles. De emphasizes that eventually every man-woman relationship is a power struggle either on an overt or subliminal level. De asserts;

A relationship between a man and a woman is no more or less personal a relationship than ... a master and his slave, a teacher and his student. Of course, there are personal, individual qualities to a particular relationship

... but they are so overshadowed by the class nature of the relationship.

(87)

These lines justify that women were object and men were subject. Men were strong and women were weak in patriarchal society. Very often De is exploring the difficulties that women face in balancing careers and women roles in a male-dominated society, thus highlighting the economic aspect of this power-play. She stresses that there can be no talk of independence for women without economic self-sufficiency. An independent mind or free spirit is meaningless so long as the body and soul are being kept together by somebody else.

De's treatment of the contemporary urban woman's challenges, predicament, values and life-style are surely not without significance. Through her essays, she has tried to shatter patriarchal hegemony, by vociferously drawing attention to women's exploitation, discrimination and commoditization in the Indian ethos. De in her non-fiction the traditional concept of masculinity or gender role is being in the question because it is not natural and fixed in the new time or consciousness rather it is changeable and the product of power society of the time that subverts all the rigid notions of gender role.

Generally the traditional masculinity or patriarchy contains the value of strength, power stoicism, action, control, independence, self-sufficiency, male mastership and higher work that try to justify that alone men were associated with the masculinity with the metaphor of reason, control and distance of supreme position in the socio-culture, political and economical activities.

De presents the women strong role for females' freedom and rights. They revolt against the patriarchal norms and values. De's writing challenges the patriarchal, social and political norms and values. De states: "Men aren't strong. They are bullies. If they can possibly get away with their wives moving heavy furniture, carrying monstrous sling-bags while travelling, pushing the car on a lonely highway-they will" (179). These lines argue that she has been critiquing the established myths about men.

The archetypal Indian male in Shobha De's *Surviving Men* has been painted in the murkiest colors. She has also used animal imagery like, "The man was a dog." She asserts: "I believe men have feelings the same way dogs have feelings" (33).

Shobha De considers sex to be an involuntary state, in which women have the status of chattel. To women, sex and the family are inextricably bound up with private property, the class structure, and the mode of production. In other words, the family is an aspect of capitalism. Men left the home to become wage earners in the outside world; women assumed care of the family within the home. Women's labor became an essential, but subordinate, aspect of freeing men to make a wage. Feminists cannot ignore the blatant fact that industrialization offered women an unprecedented opportunity to make wages outside the home: that is, to be economically independent.

De called for the revolutionary breakdown of gender roles. She encouraged women to be promiscuous and otherwise sexually adventurous. De writes; "that the traditional family is the basic building block of society's institutions; it weaves the very fabric of cultural values" (189). Feminists agree this threshold of agreement; however, an ideological brawl has broken out the family. Only families can offer the long-term emotional stability and commitment that child rearing requires. Only families can ensure

reproduction and the proper socialization of children. Beyond this, families provide an emotional and sexual support system for married couples, who need a shelter against the buffets of a hostile world. Without the family, patriarchy predicts the breakdown of moral values and an upsurge of social anarchy. From end of the political spectrum, feminists roundly reject the patriarchal norms and values for much that the patriarchies embrace it. It is a bastion of traditional values and a training ground for society's institutions.

The family is the foundation of patriarchal capitalism, which feminists' claim is the source of women's oppression. The conflict over the Indian family is further complicated by how quickly this institution is redefining itself. In the typical family consisted of a husband and wife, with two or three children. The wife stayed at home, while the husband worked in the outside world to provide for his family. Today, there seem to be no typical families, no stereotype of a nuclear unit. Domestic life has been transformed by economic realities that force most mothers into the work place and out of the kitchen. This transformation in the family presents something of a problem for patriarchy. It is difficult to consider something that takes as many forms as the modern family to be uniformly unjust in every instance. This is true even of a family that consists entirely of females, a family with only a single mother and a daughter, for example. This type of family is oppressed by men because its interactions are a reflection of the injustice of patriarchy that both females encounter in the workplace and the political system. Because they are females, their family unit will be economically poorer and have fewer opportunities than a comparable family unit that is male, such as a man and his son. The fight over the family and sex is an ideological one. De who chronicled the angst of an upper middle class urban housewife abuses, such as domestic violence, are considered

to be unfiltered expressions of the married state. Virtually all feminists share a belief that men and women experience the family in totally different ways. This is not a biological truism; it is a statement of political and economic fact. For centuries, marriage laws favored men to such a degree that a wife could often be involuntarily committed to a mental institution on her husband's signature.

Even after marriage laws had been reformed, the institution itself seemed to favor men, for example, in the distribution of housework. De in her book *Surviving Men* (1997). De argued “Indian women were enslaved by domesticity and defined by their roles as mother and well wife” (56). De’s goal was not to eliminate sex. She merely wanted women to insist on more from life, for them to reach outside of home for fulfillment. Under capitalism, women assumed the role of breeders, housewives and buyers of consumer goods. Women maintained the work force by providing laundry, food and cleaning services for without pay. De considers is women are house slaves. Her solution: “women should reject their role as consumers in a capitalist society” (130).

De provided the next generation of laborers for capitalist exploitation, complete with the appropriate socialization. Thus, feminists claimed, the spheres of men’s and women’s work were indistinct. De insists that the prestige of woman’s work used to equal that of man’s. In the, industrialization was said to bring a separation between home and productive work. It caused a transfer of women’s labor from the home to the factory, while women remained at the hearth. Men came to dominate the public realm. De argues that such domesticated women perpetuate the cycle of capitalism: “Housework ... is servicing the earner physically, emotionally, sexually, getting her ready to work day after day for the wage. It is taking care of children and ensuring that they too perform in ways

expected of them under capitalism” (124). In, the issue of domestic violence has stirred up a furor of concern among women of all ages and ideologies In general; three major approaches underlie current discussions of domestic violence. A socio-cultural approach, against women is tolerated by our society; and a psychological approach, which examines the emotional reasons why men are abusive and why women accept it. A class analysis approach, by which men are said to beat women to retain their place in the patriarchal power structure. De expresses the gist of feminism’s analysis:

The basis of wife-beating is male dominance - not superior physical strength or violent temperament ... but social, economic, political, and psychological power .... Wife - beating is the chronic battering of a person of inferior power who for that reason cannot effectively resist. (124)

There can be no argument: domestic violence is a crime that demands the attention of every feminist. Every woman has the absolute right not to be beaten. But there are at least two major problems with the feminist position on domestic violence. De considers wife assault to be a socio-economic crime that must be confronted in the political arena.

De can be illustrated through the issue of housework. There is something inherently oppressive about housework. That is, they see an imbalance in the amount of domestic chores performed by women as opposed to those performed by men. The solutions offered by liberals are often individual and private, rather than public or political. For example, couples are encouraged to work out schedules that more fairly divide the labor. Men are encouraged to share the load equally.

According to feminists housework also produces surplus value which is absorbed by capitalism. The surplus value of housework is that it enables men’s labor. The fact that

individual men sometimes perform domestic work does not alter this scenario, because men - as a class - do not share the economic dependence of women. Nevertheless, Del Martin's analysis of housework does illustrate an important connection within gender feminist theory. Martin's comments are one aspect of her book entitled *Battered Wives*. Feminists, housework and wife assault are two points on the same continuum of woman's oppression. Since domestic violence is viewed as the clash of two antagonistic 'classes' - men and women - individual solutions are dismissed or downplayed as ineffective. These dismissed solutions include, for example, teaching women the art of self-defense and the use of fire arms. The important factor in class analysis was one's relationship to the mode of production; that is, are you a worker or a capitalist. Marx believed that, once they entered the work force, women would become the equal of men. Feminist Del Martin explained:

If society succeeds in pressuring women to remain home, the labor market is cut in half, and competition for jobs, money, and power is thereby cut in half. Capitalism thrives on competition, but when too many qualified competitors go after the same goal, the system begins to get clogged up.  
(234)

These lines explain the benefits of housework to capitalism. Capitalism is the process by which those who own the means of production pay wages to workers who produce goods worth more than the wages they are paid. This 'excess' is called the surplus value of labor and it is absorbed by capitalists as profit. Moreover, by encouraging women to stay at home, men can reduce the competition for money and power.

Women accepted such an unfavorable arrangement - including monogamy - because it offered security from the growing complexity of life. To explain that women have gender interests distinct from and antagonist to those of men, feminists had to reach beyond Marxism. They evolved a theory of patriarchy, in which women were oppressed as much by male culture as they were by the economic system. This evils support the collective back of women. Exactly how capitalism can benefit from restricting the pool of labor and talent from which it can draw is not fully explained. Indeed, an excess of qualified workers undercutting each other would seem - by gender feminism's standards - to be a capitalistic dream. Men cannot be convinced to assume their fair share, because such fairness goes against their class interests Feminists are clear: men as a class and capitalism as a system are the beneficiaries.

De takes a more extreme stance. First of all, housework is not viewed as an imbalance to be corrected. It is a direct expression of man's oppression of woman, which cannot be reformed by a schedule, but must be swept away. Housework is said to have a direct impact on the wages and job opportunities offered to women in the work place. Because of the precedent of housework, employers can pay women less than they are worth. Patriarchy requires violence or the subliminal threat of violence in order to maintain itself. The most dangerous situation for a woman is not an unknown man in the street, or even the enemy in wartime, but a husband or lover in the isolation of their own home. Thus, there are two layers of exploitation: men and capitalism, which combine to form patriarchy. Domestic violence is particularly frightening because it occurs where women are supposed to safe, when they are at home behind locked doors and shielded from strangers. Yet women are more likely to be assaulted by a 'loved one' than by a

stranger and that domestic assault usually is more violent than street attacks. For women, domestic violence reconfirms a fear that borders on paranoia: the fear that they are safe nowhere and from no one. Shobhaa De explained the reasoning behind such shock tactics; “Women have been seasoned as slaves and prostitutes. But no matter how we’re seasoned as prostitute or as wife, which is the same thing ... we’re seasoned in the patriarchal family almost exclusively to serve sexual functions” (66-67). De’s goal is converting domestic violence.

De’s political gender analysis has reframed the problem of violence against women as one of misuse of power by men who have been socialized into believing they have the right to control the women in their lives. The domestic violence is presenting women as in a state of crisis. De poses a significant challenge to the long-standing and still-surviving assumption of political theories that the sphere of family and personal life is sharply distinct from the rest of social and political life, that the state can and should restrain itself from intrusion into the domestic scene. Most women however, much they might want to reform marriage - do not want to abolish their husbands and children. When dealing with the protestations of women who wished to become wives and mothers, feminist groups, who had been conditioned by male culture. The desires that were socially incarnated in us in order to affect our subordination to men can be named and disowned. Perhaps they perceive how unpopular this stand is making them among a majority of women. De’s goal remains the same: “a revolution to sweep away patriarchy” (267).

Feminists who argued that, since the family was at the root of women's oppression, De argues that the family - the so-called personal sphere - must be opened to

political change, by force if necessary. The state should reach into the home to make it just contends that the state already intervenes in that it establishes the social background in which the family functions. Expanding the intervention - by requiring payment for housework for example - is a difference of degree; "What about couples who wish to maintain a more traditional marriage? What of those women who want to work out the terms of their family structure for themselves, with their husbands" (73)? De argues that such personal desires are irrelevant; the family is too important a social institution to be abandoned to the arbitrary wishes of the individuals involved. The terms on which a family divides up housekeeping may seem to be the business of the individuals involved, but, in reality, it is a matter of social justice. The state must dictate the terms of family life to ensure equity.

De's specific recommendations for making families 'just' would require nothing less than a total restructuring of the economy. For example, with reference to providing a salary for housewives, De suggests that both spouses should have a legal entitlement to every Re-coming into the house: "The clearest and simplest way of doing this would be to have employers make out wage checks equally divided between the earner and the partner who provides all or most of his or her unpaid domestic services" (129). This demand is the logical and inevitable extension of the principle 'The personal is political.' Fortunately, another tradition within feminism is more suspicious of the state. Even the tradition has offered resistance to following the principle 'the personal is political' to its logical conclusion. The state is interested in control and legitimacy. De continued by asking a long series of outraged questions:

Can there be legal rape? Did this man rape his wife? Would it have been rape had he not been married to her? Does the law protect the person of woman in marriage? Does it protect her person out of marriage? If a man stabs his wife to death with a knife, does not the law hold him for murder? If he murders her with his penis, what does the law do? Can men have more absolute power over a subject than a man has over the genitals of his wife? Has freedom gender? (266)

About a year ago woman gave birth to a babe, and was severely torn by the use of instruments in incompetent night, her husband came down, forced himself into her bed and the stitches were torn from her healing flesh, leaving her in a worse condition than ever. The second principle was that the state had no business dictating forms of sexuality or marriage to the individuals involved. The purpose of the marriage had been to declare the right of individuals to form sexual partnerships on their own, without permission from the state or society. De argues that the sexual/marriage contract is not a private one at all and should not be treated as such. Sexual contracts are not simply political; they are one of the main ways that patriarchy and capitalism sustain themselves. The sexual contract allows men to form an aristocracy of political and social privilege. De contends, Political right originates in sex-right or conjugal right. Paternal right is only one, and not the original, dimension of patriarchal power. A man's power as a father comes after he has exercised the patriarchal right of a man over a woman.

To the ending, De makes her aim of liberating women from the male's clutches and subverting gender role. She has clearly given her views on art, marriage, sex, culture and religion through her essay.

### **III. Subversion against Submission: An Affirmation for Equality**

Shobhaa De has been presenting life style, the operating of male ideology; the shattering human values of the glittering society and the biased and stereotypical concept about females. And such issues are as real in society. Feminists insist that the state must thrust justice into an inherently oppressive condition of family life and equality cannot be established till the submissive structure of patriarchy dismantled. The states withdraw from work out their own definition of justice in the privacy of their own homes.

The Indian society is highly traditional, conservative and superstitious that is why human beliefs, manners, behaviors and thinking have been massively regulated and shaped by the rules and dictates of myths, religion and culture. The cultural functioning and religious performances have ascribed a second grade and inferior position of female. In a patriarchal society, a women's position is deplorable and she has to either accept the suppression or go against creating her autonomous existence, identity and role model in the society. The question of selfhood becomes a serious subject of concern only when they are independent and liberal in the society with respect to their male counterparts. However, such independence and freedom for women rarely occur in a patriarchal society and as a result women suffer from not being recognized their own identity, the state is already too intimate a partner in everyday life. So, various social programming, institutional practices, policy making, educational background compel female to live under domination and vulnerable life.

But the modern Indian marriage contracts are not agreements between a husband and wife so much as they are three-sided arrangements between a husband, a wife and the state. That is, the state legally defines what a marriage is and how it can be dissolved.

Without government approval - in the form of a divorce decree from the court - a marriage cannot be terminated. In essence, the state has a controlling interest. And the state must bear a great deal of the blame for the current evils of marriage and sex. Feminists agree that a revolution is necessary. But one that gives power to individuals and not to institutions, like the state. Women need liberation, not state control. In essence, freedom must be taken out of the political realm and fully back into the private one. In liberation, as in all other peaceful pursuits of life, let individuals choose.

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