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**FEMINIST LITERARY THEORY:
A CHRISTIAN APPROACH**

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Introduction

There are different theories of literary criticism based on different philosophies and ideologies. Theories of criticism help in the reading and interpretation of literature. There are various competing approaches all claiming that in the critique of literary texts one should be objective and neutral. But the so called “objectivity and value-neutrality” of academicians has been questioned and challenged,” Osiek (1995: 93) argues that “no interpretation is purely objective but is always conditioned by the presuppositions and prejudices of the interpreter.” Most critics argue that there are inherent internal and external factors that influence creative critical interpretation of literary texts. So the Adventist teacher must communicate to students how the reading of literature can enrich one’ relationship with God so that their interpretation will be conditioned by biblical values.

At Solusi University we have many literature courses at B.A. and B. Ed. Undergraduates program level. ENGL 212: Theories of criticism is one of the core courses taught in the first semester of their second year when they have studied general courses including Christian beliefs and sciences of origin.. This is intentional, so that by the time the students study literature courses a strong foundation of Adventist beliefs has been inculcated.

There are many theories of criticism studied in this course, Pre-modernism: Historical – Biographical and Moral-Philosophical approach. Modernism: Formalism, Reader Response, and Psychoanalytic; Postmodernism: Deconstructionism, Marxism, Feminism, Post – Colonialism and other cultural theories. The feminist literary theory has been deliberately chosen though the Seventh - Day Adventist position is that we do not believe in all the –isms. The fact is that all these approaches are taught so as to equip our students with the skills they need to interpret literature and to meet market demands, but also upholding their faith. We know we risk exposing them to certain concepts that can have a negative impact on their thinking but we also know that we cannot shield them from the realities of the world. Hence the integration of faith and learning becomes pivotal.

Our graduates who go to teach in state or church schools will be given syllabuses that state the literature books and poems to be studied in order to prepare students for the national exam. Amongst those books there has to be selections of feminist literature because it is a contemporary hot issue. But Ellen White says, "The great aim of a teacher should be the perfecting of a Christian character in himself and in his students" (Counsels to Parents and Teachers, p. 68). So the issue is not only passing exams but also building and nurturing the students' relationship with God and inculcating skills that will be used in life. The aim is to ensure that students have freely internalised biblical values and view of knowledge that is bible based, Christ-centered and kingdom oriented. This will be achieved by giving them Christian oriented skills of criticism so that they will always be able to read between the lines. It will give them presuppositions and insights that are biblical which will help them in their reading, understanding, analysing, critiquing and evaluation of literature they will come across. A lot of literature students are subjected to literature that has been greatly influenced by postmodernism worldviews; hence the integration of faith and learning is of paramount importance.

Purpose of the paper

Christianity has been the main target of feminist literary critics and other cultural approaches like Marxists, post-colonialist, etc. Fiorenza (1983: 7) a theologian argues that "the outset of the women's movement and even today, the bible has played a key role in the argument against women's emancipation" Ryken in Davis (2002: 22) concurs that Christianity has been criticised for its racial, colonial, sexual and gender prejudices, and for its slowness in coming to grips with its 'church-approved' mistreatment of powerless groups. Mama (1996:29) occurs that "religion is a major vehicle for gender ideologies that oppress women. All major religious texts have provided justifications for the oppression of women and assertions of male superiority."

This article seeks to: 1. Make students aware that feminist claims that the Bible allows men to discriminate and marginalise women are not true. 2.challenge the patriarchal ideology that argues that the woman's place is in the kitchen from a Christian perspective. 3. Develop a Christian approach in the teaching of the feminist theory of

criticism. 4. Develop tools that will help students in the interpretation, analysis and critique of literary texts in the context of their Christian values.

Students should be taught to guard against overly identifying with fictional characters for they must approach serious fiction in which the writer “wishes most intensely for the readers to agree with his world-view and to adopt his/her values” without “loosing the protective value of criticism” and they must wrestle with moral effects of what they are reading. A critique of the different feminist literary theories of criticism highlighting the flaws from a Christian perspective will be done.

Definitions and Explanations of Terms/Concepts

Literary criticism: Literary criticism and literary theory are often used interchangeably. Davis (2002: 7) defines it as “the principles and assumptions, which guides the literary critic in analysing and interpreting texts”.

Sex – refers “to a condition of being male or female based on physical characteristics of people” (Moyo, 2005: 40). These are biological differences.

Sexism – Moyo (2005: 40) says sexism is “prejudices or discrimination of women in favour of men”. Variations in the behaviour and social roles of men and women are explained in terms of hormones.

Gender

Mannathako in Meena (1992: 78) explains that gender is a “relational concept that denotes the manner on which men and women are differentiated and ordered in a given socio-cultural context.” It is a social construction to describe people as male and female. Stoller in Moyo (2003: 45) argues that gender is “a term that has psychological and cultural connotations”. Whereas the proper terms for sex are male and female, terms for gender are feminine and masculine, which might be independent of biological sex. What this means is that being a woman is not necessarily associated with being feminine, but cultural interpretation of gender is based on biological differences. As a result culturally determined patterns of behaviour such as rights, duties, obligations, status and all roles assigned to men and women are varied even within the same society.

Feminist theory of criticism

Feminism is derived from the Latin word femina, which means woman (Moyo, 2003:40). The original meaning of feminism refers to having characteristics of being female, but in the gender debate it is used as a perspective on sexual equality. The core of feminism as a theory is “men and women should be equal politically, economically and socially”. Osiek in Collins (1985) defines feminism “as concern for the promotion and dignity of women in all aspects of society, especially in as much as that promotion and dignity are conditioned by biblical interpretation.” Davidson (1998) concurs with Osiek that feminism does coalesce around certain perceptions that men “have oppressed women” that male dominated societies have not allowed women a “voice” that the result has “trivialized what it means to be a woman.” It’s appropriate “goal is to change this degrading view of women so that they possess the same privileges and rights as every man” (p.20). Poe (2004: 167) says, “Feminist criticism is rooted in a political/social struggle”. Green K. and Lebihan J. (1996: 228) posit that feminism “is a politics directed at changing power relations between women and men in society.” They argue that these power relations structure all areas of life. Feminism originates from Marxism, which is based on the Evolution Theory.

Feminist literary criticism concerns

According to Bressler in Davis (2002: 20) feminist literary criticism concerns centre on several important issues;

1. The need to recognise appropriately the contributions of women writers and their writings, works which have often been ignored or discounted by the dominating male cultures,
2. The need to read literary texts from a feminist perspective, noting how male writers have revealed their inevitable anti-feminist attributes in the way they have developed their themes and their characters, or how female writers have been limited in their own development of themes and characters by the restrictions placed upon them by their male – dominated societies,

3. The need to understand how gender inevitably shows itself in the act of creating and writing, thus providing opportunities to understand how male and female perspectives, ways of thinking and ways of writing are richly embedded in the literary texts they produce.

Emphasis is on ideology and history, on how literature reveals bias, and on how literature should change society. There is emphasis on close reading of the texts to identify the relativity of language and to reveal how societal and cultural groupings control thinking. Emphasis is on how social interaction within cultures contributes to how readers interpret texts.

Contemporary feminism has three major trends, which are Liberal, Socialist/Marxist and Radical feminism. All these critical theories are used to analyse literature and will be critiqued later. In the meantime, the role of women in the Bible will be presented to challenge feminist assumptions.

THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

Where then does a Christian critic and reader of literature begin when attempting to establish a Christian approach to literature, since the Bible is being attacked of perpetuating female marginalisation and subjugation. Ryken in Davis (2002) posits that a Christian approach to literature must start with, the acceptance of Christian doctrine and morality (both derived from the Bible) and combine that 'authoritative framework' with a willingness to link 'Christian truth' with literature or 'literary theory's since the Bible is the basis for Christian faith and scripture, it must be the starting point for a Christian approach to literature. Therefore, in order to establish a Christian approach to the teaching of the feminist literary approach, the role of women in the Old and New Testament will be taught as a starting point. These will serve as a conceptual filter.

Students will be given assignments to work on in groups and present in class at the beginning of the class. The teacher will emphasize important points. The questions given seek to refute feminist and other cultural groups' claims that the Bible perpetuates women marginalization and subjugation. Paul warns Christians (Col. 2: 8) "See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy,

which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.” So the questions will guide the students in search of the truth so that they see that the feminist attack is based on inadequate information not selected from the Bible, but from human constructions influenced by patriarchy, which results in misreading and misinterpretation of the Bible.

Old Testament

- Group 1 What is the Biblical definition of who we are? (Gen. 1: 26-30).
- What was God’s command to Adam and Eve Concerning the tree?
- Group 2 Analyse what the relationship between men and women was like before the fall (Gen. 3: 16-25).
- Group 3 Identify the causes and consequences of sin (Gen. 3: 1-24).
- Group 4 Discuss the roles played by Deborah (Judges 4: 5), Huldah (2 Kings 22: 14- 20), wise woman (2 Samuel 20: 16-22), Miriam, Jochebed mother of Moses and any other heroines in the Bible.
- Group 5 Read Genesis 16: 1-12 and 21: 9-21.
- Explain whether Sarah’s rights were respected by Moses
 - What shows that God is not a discriminator?

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Group 1: On Biblical definition of who we are, students should be able to identify that we were created in the image of God. Gen. 1: 16, 17. “So created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him, male and female created he them”. Sex is male and female, therefore biologically different. Differentiation of sex is clear and woman does not have an inferior status. The hierarchical view of sexes did not exist before the fall. Davidson in Vynmeister (1998: 265) says, “Man and woman before the fall are presented as equal...” Ellen White concurs, “God had made her (Eve) the equal of Adam. Had they remained obedient to God in harmony with His great law of love” (Patriarchs and Prophets, 59: 259)

Group 2: In (Gen. 3: 16 – 25), the students must talk about God’s commandment to Adam concerning the tree of life, and the creation of Eve as the culmination of creation. Adam’s rib was used whilst he was in a deep sleep and Adam’s happiness when he saw her and the naming part. He named her “woman, because she was taken out of man”. Differentiation of sex is clear; movement of Genesis is not from superior to inferior, but from incompleteness to completeness. Woman is created as the climax, culmination of the story of creation. The rib signifies that she was not to control him as the head or to be trampled under his feet as an inferior, but to stand by his side as an equal, to be loved and protected by him. Men and women had the ideal “equal” relationship, which was perfect. In (Gen. 3: 24) it is written that, “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, man shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh”.

Group 3: Students discuss how the snake deceived Eve and she ate the fruit from the tree of life, signifying maybe her weakness to resist sin or her fragility/vulnerability. The encounter that constituted a legal process whereby the “defendants” Adam and Eve’s “defensive and accusatory response” indicate the rupture in husband-wife relationship, and divine-human relationships that has occurred as a result of sin” (Davidson 1998: 264) will be discussed. The legal interrogation and the divine judgement pronounced upon woman resulted in sex hierarchy, women subjugation, clearly stated roles and gender inequality was established. Ellen White says,

“ But sin had brought discord and now their union could be maintained and harmony preserved only by submission on the part of the other. Eve had been the first in transgression and she had fallen into temptation by separating from her companion contrary to the divine direction. It was by her solicitation that Adam sinned, and she was now placed in subjugation to her husband.” (Patriarchs and Prophets 59 pg. 259).

The divine sentence in the form of curses for the snake, man and woman announces subjugation and submission of wife to husband, not a general subordination of women to men, just as the sexual desire pronounced of wife to husband cannot be broadened to mean sexual desire of all women for all men. So the prescription should not be applied beyond husband-wife relationship.

Group 4

Roles played by Deborah: students should identify the leadership role as judge, and prophetess. Davidson in Vymeister (1998: 272) argues that, Deborah clearly exercised headship functions over men as the recognised political leader of the nation, the military leader of Israel on an equal footing with the male general Barak, and a judge to whom men and women turned for legal counsel and divine instructions. The Bible does not show that this was a unique situation, or that it was opposed or was unusual.

Roles played by Dorcas, Sarah, Hagar, Rebecca, Joacheb, Miriam, Ruth and other women they might think of must be discussed and celebrated. The students must explain that these women appear in a patriarchal period but they are recorded in memory of faithful service.

Group 5

Sarah's case shows that women had rights, which were respected. They could make suggestions and they would be taken. When she told her husband to send away Hagar and her son, he did that - even God encouraged Moses to listen to his wife. When she advised him to have a child with Hagar he did that. Students will look at how Hagar was rewarded by God even though she was a slave.

New Testament

The books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John contain rich narratives regarding women. Elizabeth, Mary, Martha, woman at the well, the prostitute, and women in the epistles of Paul show that women played a special role in the ministry of Jesus. They prove that Jesus Christ was a liberator of all humanity regardless of gender. Students will be asked to discuss why each one of them is celebrated and in which way they prove that there is no woman marginalisation in the Bible.

By the end of the lecture students should know issues discussed below. Elizabeth, Zechariah's wife is mentioned (Luke 1: 5) "they were both righteous before God, walking in all commandments and ordinance of the Lord blameless" Anna (Luke 2: 38) is described as proclaiming the incarnation in the city. She draws attention to the climatic event in the city of Jerusalem, announcing both the beginning and ending of

timed prophecies. She is a prophetess. Elizabeth and Mary also prophesied (Luke 1: 41 – 45, 1:46-55). The Gentile woman at the well testifies about Jesus. This incident is vital because it proves that Jesus came on earth for all humanity regardless of gender, social status or race. Students are asked to discuss what the roles given to the women signify. An example of exercises that can be given to students to refute feminist assumptions is given, students to work in groups. Students will be asked to do the following:

- a) Discuss Christ's attitude towards women as portrayed in:
 - i) Mary, Martha and Lazarus narrative (John 11:23-27)
 - ii) The adulteress (John 8:3-1)
- b) (Luke 11: 27-28) How did Jesus widen feminine roles
- c) Why did Jesus select twelve male disciples

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- a.
 - i) He loved them (John 11:5) "Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus". Martha anointed his feet, Mary was the first to see the resurrected Jesus, and Mary was also an earnest student of her Messiah. Wheeler (1995:215) suggests that "... Women had profound impact at crucial points in Jesus' ministry". Value of women's discipleship, faith, testimony, influence and contribution has been tremendously overlooked but the Bible has all the evidence.
 - ii) The people wanted to stone the adulteress but Jesus being just, challenged anyone who was clean to attack her and they all disappeared.
- b. Jesus widened the feminine perspective "Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts you sucked" implying that women's responsibility is to give birth to children by not condemning it but by showing that there is more to life than that "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it" (Luke 11:27-28). He also did not belittle the role of a mother.
- c. Why did Jesus select twelve men, Jewish men only? Evelyn and Frank cited in Vyhmeister, (1998) explain that the twelve apostles included no women, nor

did they include any Samaritans even though Jesus repudiated the Jewish-Samaritan antipathy. Custom may have been so entrenched that Jesus simply stopped short of fully implementing a principle that he made explicit and emphatic “(Mark 3:35) “whoever does the will of God is my brother, sister and mother. Jesus’ influence is seen in (Gal 3:28) “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.” Implications of all the above cases should be discussed in order to position the roles and contribution of women in the New Testament.

Paul’s Messages

In spite of Paul’s declaration in (Gal.3: 28), he receives the greatest scorn from feminists. Why? Students will be asked to read? (1Timothy 2:11-15) (1Cor 11:5) (Cor 14:34-35, 14:40, Rom 12:1-2). The verses should help the students see that Paul’s counsel to Timothy in Ephesus portrays Paul’s attitudes and dealings with women in churches in other cities because of the contextual differences. Paul acknowledges that women pray but his wish was to have worship done “decently and orderly” Scott (1994: 394) cited in Davidson argues that Paul thinks highly of women “the prominent place occupied by women in Paul’s letters shows that he was not at all the male chauvinist of popular fantasy”.

Therefore, neither Old nor New Testament women should be used to illustrate that “according to scripture all women must be in submission to all men”. Women in scripture were competent, confident and excelling in many different roles including positions of leadership. Therefore feminists have been wrong in their understanding of the portrayal of women in the Bible. Old and New Testament canons affirm women’s roles in the home and public ministry.

Having identified the Christian interpretation of who we are, origin of hierarchy, and the roles of women in both Old and New Testament, a Christian approach and working tools to use will be developed. These will guide students in the reading, analysis, interpretation, and critique of literary texts. Whereas Adventists do not fully accept what feminists advocate for, I appreciate that there are valuable concepts which can be identified and developed in conjunction with biblical principles to come

up with a Christian approach to the analysis, interpretation and critique of literary texts. This approach will help students identify pertinent issues they are expected to identify, and to critique from a feminist perspective, whilst affirming their Christian world-view during critiquing of the secular views in an academically accepted way.

Christian approach to feminism is based on the following premises:

1. Man and woman were all created in the image of God with equal intellectual capability.
2. Redemption's purpose is the restoration of creation to what it was intended to be. Thus, salvation can be described as "the new creation" (2 cor. 5: 17, Eph. 4: 24) so God's intention is the restoration to the original - including women.
3. The principle of equality is based on the concept of complementarity. During the restoration of the covenant of mutuality in Christ "the curse on marriage is lifted and complementarity is restored" (1 Cor. 11:11). The husband's role of leadership and the wife's role of submission are reaffirmed but radically altered. Submission becomes a mutual calling (Eph. 5:2) transforming male headship from authoritative control to responsible care. Its paradigm is now modelled after the self-sacrificial death of Jesus for the church (Eph. 5: 25 – 32) and its purpose is not to crush but to liberate. Submission on the part of the wife is transformed from servility and subordination to respect. (Eph. 5:33). Ferguson in Vhymeister posits that "the bible is constantly in balance by legislation and history that point forward to a fuller more liberating place for women in the redemptive plan of God". Ellen White says woman, if she wisely improves herself and her faculty, relying upon God for wisdom and strength, may stand on an equal footing with her husband as adviser, counsellor, companion and co-worker and yet lose none of her womanly grace or modesty". (Good Health, June 1880)
4. Traditional social roles for both men and women are overturned in the redemption plan. The ideal wife works outside as well as in the home (Pro. 31: 10 – 27). The woman's place is not only in the kitchen as defined by Patriarchal society. Ellen White acknowledges this, "there is a wide field in which our sisters may do good service for the master. There are many offices connected with the cause of God, which our sisters are equally or better

qualified to fill compared to our brethren, and in which they might do efficient service. (Welfare Ministries, 1952:160). So the patriarchal compartmentalization of women's roles is not acceptable.

5. Men and women should be paid equal wages if they are doing the same kind of job. Ellen White counsels, "Seventh - day Adventist are not in anyway to belittle women's work. If a woman puts her housework in the hands of a faithful prudent helper and lives her children in good care whilst she engages in her work, the conference should have wisdom to understand the justice of her receiving wages. (Gospel Workers, 1915: 457). Any form of injustice against women should be condemned. Ellen White counsels "injustice has sometimes been done to women. God is a God of justice, and if the ministers receive a salary for their work, then, their wives should be paid in addition to the wages of their husbands" (Gospel Workers 1915: 456).
6. Women do not need to develop macho qualities in order to be effective workers. The feminine qualities do not need to be destroyed in females and develop masculine qualities in order to be useful. Women can be successful without losing their "grace and modesty". Women emancipation can be achieved without being militant or hostile to men. Ellen White says, "Her individuality may be distinctively preserved, and yet advancing the work of reform so greatly needed" (Welfare Min. 1952. 160).
7. Women have special talents that they have been endowed with which men do not have that can be used to compliment each other. Ellen White comments that the refining, softening influence of Christian women is needed in the great work of preaching the truth, now we are lacking in deeds of sympathy and benevolence, in sacred and social ministering to the needy, the oppressed, and the suffering (Signs of the Times, 16. 1886 cited in Welfare Ministry 1952. 146).

There is a special way women may contribute economically, politically and socially in the 21st century. Ellen White posits that "women can come close to the hearts of those whom men cannot reach, their labor is needed" (Review & Herald, Aug. 26. 1902)

8. Contributions of women writers and women heroines should be recognized and celebrated.

9. Analyse and evaluate the portrayal of women by male authorship and of men by female authorship.
10. Recognize and understand how male and female perspectives, ways of thinking and writing are embedded in the literary texts.

Christian Approach Working Tools

Having outlined the premises on which Christian Approach to feminism is based, the students should master them so that they will be able to apply them in their analysis, interpretation and critique of the different types of feminist literary texts they will read using the tools of criticism which are presented below in question form.

1. Does the writer subscribe to the Biblical principles on the role of women?
2. Which Biblical principles does the writer violate if any, how?
3. Are there prejudices against men and women in the text?
4. In which way is the restoration and empowerment of women being done?
5. Which feminine/masculine attributes have been portrayed/violated and why?
6. Examine language and analyze the aesthetic value of the text.
7. What is the writer advocating for?
8. What are the thematic arguments being highlighted or developed in the text, and are they in harmony with Christian or secularist worldview?

The above questions are not in any hierarchical order. The reader can use his/her own style of writing but basing his or her interpretation on these questions. Other questions not presented in the model but can help the analyst to critique, objectively for an in-depth analysis can be used.

CRITIQUE OF THE FEMINIST LITERARY THEORIES

Liberal feminism

Liberal feminism demands equal opportunities and equal participation in the management of the societies. It is a reformist approach to changing gender inequalities. Liberal feminists advocate for gradual change in the political, economic

and social systems, because they believe that nobody benefits from gender inequality". They believe that public opinion on these issues can be changed through formal networks and changes in the legislature. Maitayed (2004:18) in her study discovered that, though in most countries women have won the right to vote, legal barriers to female participation in the labour force have been removed, concessions have been made for their own name, yet in real terms structures of oppression and subordination of women have remained intact. Formal equality does not guarantee structural equality between women and men, and in fact it obscures and legitimizes real inequalities between women and men. These results prove that the equality that feminists are advocating for is an illusion. Man and woman were created equal intellectually, but physically/biologically different and this has an impact on the roles they play and priorities they put to these roles, as a result equality is subjective.

Radical feminists

Radical feminist demand radical transformation of gender relations. They see the origin of women's oppression as biology, culture- particularly patriarchy and religion. This approach focuses on reducing inequality. They have launched a wholesale onslaught against male dominated society and consider men as the enemy. They are wrong on the origin of women subordination as indicated in the Christian feminist approach, which is sin. Their approach creates division and hatred amongst sexes and challenges the family institution that God instituted on creation. As a result, students will identify a lot of ideas and issues which violate Biblical principles from these writers, for example having children out of wedlock, not getting married as ways of rebelling against "traditional" roles are celebrated etc. Students should be able to analyse and critique texts written from this approach, and indicate issues they identify to be unbiblical.

Marxist feminism

Marxist feminism bases the origins of inequality on historical events and the thesis is that humans are economic animals, which is not true as indicated in Gen. 1:24. They located women's oppression in their inability to participate in the public sphere. Dialectical materialism is applied in analysing source of gender oppression. However

in both socialist and capitalist states, participation of women in the public sphere did not automatically lead to their liberation because they occupied low paying jobs. Women have had the burden of making a full contribution in the work force and also remain as a major source of domestic labour doing household chores. What this proves is that the love of God and his principles of loving one another should be the solution. Students will find texts written from a Marxist perspective interesting and challenging, however the teacher should emphasise the use of presented tools of criticism

Application

A critique of the poem "Ain't I a woman?" by Sojourner Truth (Busby. 1992). Using the Christian approach to feminist criticism and with the use of the working tools of criticism given, students will be asked to read, analyse, and critique the given poem.

Ain't I a Woman? By Sojourner Truth

That man over there say
A woman needs to be helped into carriages
And lifted over ditches
And to have the best place everywhere.
Nobody ever helped me into carriages
Or over mud puddles
Or gives me a best place....

Ain't I a Woman?
Look at me
Look at my arm!
I have plowed and planted
And gathered into barns
And no man could head me....

And ain't I a Woman?
I could work as much
And eat as much as a man-
When I could get to it-
And bear the lash as well

and ain't I a Woman?
I have born thirteen children
and seen most all sold into slavery
and when I cried out a mother' grief
none but Jesus heard me...

and ain't I a Woman?
That little man in black there say
a woman can't have as much rights as a man
cause Christ wasn't a woman.
Where did your Christ come from?
From God and a woman!
Man had nothing to do with him!

If the first woman ever made
Was strong enough to turn the world
Up side down, all alone
Together woman ought to be to able to turn it
right side up again.

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Students must identify that this a poem is written from a feminist perspective. The poet is protesting against women's marginalisation of their rights by men. They should identify that during slavery men and women experienced the same harsh realities of slavery. The poet is advocating for radical transformation of society and she says if women unite they can change women's position in society. The students must identify why the poet is protesting against men who try to give women special treatment. They should be able to describe the evils of slavery that both men and women experienced. They should discuss why men in a patriarchal society say women should not have the same rights with men. What women have done which could not be done by men. how women can free themselves from oppression, male dominance and marginalisation and liberate themselves should be discussed. They should also discuss biblical principles violated in the poem.

Implications

There are perceived unequal opportunities that exist in most denominational institutions and organisations, including the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, which still needs to grow in terms of gender balance in order to apply Biblical principles. It is still entrenched in patriarchal leadership. The church should be play a pivotal role in the conscientization of its members on the important roles women can play when given a chance. It should be seen to be correcting gender inequalities in its institutions and the church at large. Gender balance in positions of authority in church

organisations and institutions should be practiced when qualified women are available. These promotions should be based on qualifications and ability. A quota system can be developed to empower women socially, politically and economically. Women emancipation can be achieved by access to education.

Today's youth and the contemporary men and women should be sensitized on God's restoration plan concerning women so that they can be actively involved, and a Christian community sensitive to male and female relations nurtured. Feminist literary approach to criticism should be taught highlighting its weaknesses and recommending to the students the use of the Christian approach to criticism and the use of the tools given. Those who have the responsibility and opportunity in the restoration process to restore the woman to God's original ideal have a heavy responsibility. Equal energy being put in the restoration of humanity to Jesus Christ must be put in uplifting women so that their full potential can be realized.

Successful women should become models of what a successful woman can be and do to balance family, work and individuality. Women emancipation programs should be developed so that men and women can work together harmoniously whilst women do not feel unfairly treated. After studying this approach, students will be more conscious of any forms of injustices and gender inequality practices. Women might start agitating for their perceived rights and gender equality in the economic, political and social sphere. Therefore it is important to teach them to do all things in the fear of the Lord. Literary texts to be carefully chosen, where possible they should be in harmony with our Christian principles, but where they are imposed by syllabi the lesson should be carefully planned in order to integrate faith and learning. By using the Christian approach the secular ideas and philosophies will be criticized using the criticism tools provided. Language used must be gender sensitive.

Conclusion

The feminist literary approach has been described. The role of women in the Bible has been discussed and it has been proved that the Bible is gender balanced and women are not marginalised. A Christian approach to the feminist literary theory has been developed highlighting the premises on which it is based. Analytical tools were developed which will guide the learners in the critiquing of literary texts. Student activities will allow them to be actively involved in the learning process. Implications of studying the feminist approach were highlighted and advice on tackling the problem given. A poem for critical analysis was given for application. Integration of faith and learning has been applied through the development of a Christian approach that was developed after proving that women in Old and New Testament were not marginalised. A critique of feminist theories was done and students should be encouraged to apply these concepts. Having equipped the students with these skills they will not be deficient in anyway, or be susceptible to uncritical acceptance of feminist philosophies and ideologies. The moral, spiritual and academic dimension of criticism will be developed.

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