I. Feminist Social Theory

A. Tries to understand and explain society from the point of view of women.

1. Understand the extent and nature of gender inequality and oppression.

2. Explain the reasons or causes of gender inequality and oppression.

3. Offer suggestions for solving inequality.

4. Mary Wollstonecraft: “A Vindication of the Rights of Women”

B. Several types of theory: Socialist feminism, Liberal feminism,

Marxian feminism, Radical feminism, Cultural feminism, Intersectionality Theory

C. Liberal feminism

1. Focus: Inequality

a. work/occupation

b. marriage and family

c. education

d. political/legal

e. cultural/representations

2. Cause: Socially constructed patriarchal system

3. Solution: change through

a. law

b. government regulation

c. fairness

d. global: “human rights”

4. Argument :

a. Women’s rights: Declaration of Sentiments

b. Definition: gender

.

c. Gender socialization (aka social construction of gender)

i. gendered norms

ii. gendered personality traits

iii. gender and the body

d. Gender segregation

i. Work

type of jobs

wages

ii. Home:

cult of true womanhood

second shift

iii. Women and childbearing

e. Institutions

i. education

ii. health care

5. Successes

a. Laws and enforcement against discrimination

b. Laws and enforcement against violence

c. Equality of health care

d. Family leave

c. Education

D. Radical Feminism

1. Thesis: The most fundamental structure of oppression is

partriarchy.

a. oldest, most pervasive, and most enduring

b. least visible

c. central: violence (controlling life chances, environments,

and perceptions of group)

2. Argument

a.. Physical violence is used to protect patriarch from

women’s individual and collective resistance.

i. rule of thumb

ii. rape

iii. spousal and intimate partner abuse

iv. incest

v. female infanticide

vi. adultery: stoning

vii. witchcraft: burning

viii. practice of clitorectomy

d. Men’s interests

i. satisfying sexual desire

ii. childbearing

iii. free labor

iv. status symbols

v. emotional support

e. solutions

i. consciousness

ii. cooperation

iii. confrontation

iv. separation