

## Chapter 1 : Eleventh grade Lesson Introduction to Feminist Theory

*Feminist Theory Introduction. NEXT ; In a Nutshell. Feminism is all about burning www.nxgvision.com hating men. And being a witch, lesbian, and communist all lumped into one (they're all the same anyway, right Pat?).*

Structuralism and Semiotics Structuralism Structuralism is a way of thinking about the world which is predominantly concerned with the perceptions and description of structures. At its simplest, structuralism claims that the nature of every element in any given situation has no significance by itself, and in fact is determined by all the other elements involved in that situation. The full significance of any entity cannot be perceived unless and until it is integrated into the structure of which it forms a part Hawkes, p. Structuralists believe that all human activity is constructed, not natural or "essential. Semiology Semiotics, simply put, is the science of signs. Semiology proposes that a great diversity of our human action and productions--our bodily postures and gestures, the the social rituals we perform, the clothes we wear, the meals we serve, the buildings we inhabit--all convey "shared" meanings to members of a particular culture, and so can be analyzed as signs which function in diverse kinds of signifying systems. Linguistics the study of verbal signs and structures is only one branch of semiotics but supplies the basic methods and terms which are used in the study of all other social sign systems Abrams, p. Binary Opposition - "pairs of mutually-exclusive signifiers in a paradigm set representing categories which are logically opposed and which together define a complete universe of discourse relevant ontological domain , e. In such oppositions each term necessarily implies its opposite and there is no middle term" Daniel Chandler. The distinction is important because Saussure contended that the relationship between signifier and signified is arbitrary; the only way we can distinguish meaning is by difference one sign or word differs from another. Instead, meaning--the interpretation of a sign--can exist only in relationship with other signs. Selden and Widdowson use the sign system of traffic lights as an example. The color red, in that system, signifies "stop," even though "there is no natural bond between red and stop" Meaning is derived entirely through difference, "a system of opposites and contrasts," e. Northwestern UP, Hill and Wang, The Pleasure of the Text. Structuralism, Linguistics, and the Study of Literature. U of California P, Jefferson, Anne and David Robey. Revolution in Poetic Language and Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art. After the New Criticism. The Raw and the Cooked. John and Doreen Weighman. Semiotics of Poetry Peirce, Charles. Values in a Universe of Chance: Selected Writings of Charles S. The Morphology of the Folktale. U of Texas P, Course in General Linguistics. The Subject of Semiotics. A Survey of Semiotics. A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre.

**Chapter 2 : Feminist Approaches to Literature | Great Writers Inspire**

*The Saylor Foundation 1 Introduction to Feminist Theory Feminist theory is one of the most progressive and dynamic modes of literary theory.*

Introduction This page includes information on different literary Genres , specific Historical Periods , Pedagogical issues, Politics and literature, and literary Theory. Smith, Sidonie and Julia Watson, ed. *Murder By the Book? Feminism and the Crime Novel*. Gender in the Theater of War: Shakespeare and Feminist Politics. *The Art and Politics of Women Playwrights*. General Kester-Shelton, Pamela, ed. *Feminist Fiction in America*. Harper San Francisco, Narrative Singley, Carol J. *Reading, Writing, and Ambivalence in Narrative by Women*. *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel*. Cather, Canon, and the Politics of Reading. *Laughter, War, and Feminism: Feminist Fiction and the Tradition*. *The Sense of Sex: Feminist Perspectives on Hardy*. Tolstoy, the *Woman Question*, and the *Victorian Novel*. *Feminism and the Postmodern Impulse: Renaissance Poet and Feminist*. Fountain, Gay and Peter Brazeau. *An Alchemy of Genres: Poetry, Privilege, and the Politics of Subjectivity*. *A Study of Feminism and Poetry*. *Feminist Criticism of American Women Poets: An Annotated Bibliography*, *The Dream and the Dialogue: Fuller, Emerson, and the Play of Reading*. Rhetoric Campbell, JoAnn, ed. *Toward a Feminist Rhetoric: The Writing of Gertrude Buck*. *Feminist Interpretations of Mary Wollstonecraft*. *Science Fiction Burwell, Jennifer*. *Feminism, Utopian Logic, and Social Transformation*. *Short Stories Dyman, Jenni*. *The Ghost Stories of Edith Wharton*. *Utopian Literature Bammer, Angelika*. *Feminism and Utopianism in the s*. Classical Cohen, Beth, ed. *Gender, Audiences, and Narrators in the Odyssey*. Euripides and the *Traffic in Women*. Rabinowitz, Nancy Sorkmin and Amy Richlin, ed. *Feminist Theory and the Classics*. *Medieval Evans, Ruth and Lesley Johnson*. *Feminist Readings in Middle English Literature: Lomperis, Linda and Sarah Stanbury*, ed. *Feminist Approaches to the Body in Medieval Literature*. *Renaissance Bowen, Barbara E*. Howard, Jean and Phyllis Rackin. *Literary Texts and Political Models*. *The Feminist Voices in Restoration Comedy: Press of America*, Harman, Barbara Leah and Susan Meyer, ed. *The New Nineteenth Century: Feminist Readings of Underread Victorian Fiction*. Penn State University Press, *Medicine, the Novel, and Female Insanity*, Birkett, Jennifer and Elizabeth Harvey, ed. *Studies in the Construction of the Female Subject*, Press of Virginia, *The Art and Politics of Female Playwrights*. *From the Inside Out: The Erotics of Talk: Thompson, Ann and Helen Wilcox*, ed. *Feminism and English Studies*. Belsey, Catherine and Jane Moore, ed. *Essays in Gender and the Politics of Literary Criticism*. *The Feminist Critique of Language: Literature, Feminism and the Alpha Male: A Search Beyond the Dominance Metaphor*. *Hermeneutics of the Feminine*. *What Does a Woman Want? Reading and Sexual Difference*. *Feminist Contributions to the Literary Canon: Setting Standards of Taste*. Fisher, Jerilyn and Ellen S. *Analyzing the Different Voice: Feminist Psychological Theory and Literary Texts*. Rowman and Littlefield, Florence, Penny and Dee Reynolds, ed. *Bibliography of Feminist Criticism*. Hedges, Elaine and Shelley Fisher Fishkin, ed. *New Essays in Feminist Criticism*. *Mother Tongue, Father Time: A Decade of Linguistic Revolt*. Hohne, Karen and Helen Wussow, ed. *A Dialogue of Voices: Feminist Literary Theory and Bakhtin*. *The Voices and Words of Women and Men*. Kuribayashi, Tomoko and Julie Tharp, ed. *Essays in Literary Theory*. *Women and Language in Literature and Society*. *The Practice of Feminist Criticism*. Miller, Casey and Kate Swift. *Studies in Reading and Culture*. *Feminist Occasions and Other Autobiographical Acts*. Mora, Gabriela and Karen S.

**Chapter 3 : Project MUSE - Feminist Literary Criticism**

*Information on feminist literary criticism and theory, including autobiography, autography, autofiction, crime novels, detective stories, drama, theatre, plays.*

Introduction Feminism brings many things to philosophy including not only a variety of particular moral and political claims, but ways of asking and answering questions, critiques of mainstream philosophical views and methods, and new topics of inquiry. Feminist contributions to and interventions in mainstream philosophical debates are covered in entries under "Feminism, interventions". Entries covered under the rubric "Feminism, topics" concern philosophical issues that arise as feminists articulate accounts of sexism, critique sexist social and cultural practices, and develop alternative visions of a just world. In short, they are philosophical topics that arise within feminism. Although there are many different and sometimes conflicting approaches to feminist philosophy, see "Feminism, approaches to" , it is instructive to begin by asking what, if anything, feminists as a group are committed to. Considering some of the controversies over what feminism is provides a springboard for seeing how feminist commitments generate a host of philosophical topics, especially as those commitments confront the world as we know it. My goal here will be to sketch some of the central uses of the term that are most relevant to those interested in contemporary feminist philosophy. For an overview of the history of feminist thought see: The references I provide below are only a small sample of the work available on the topics in question; more complete bibliographies are available at the specific topical entries and also at the end of this entry. Some feminists trace the origins of the term "feminism" in English as rooted in the movement in Europe and the US beginning with the mobilization for suffrage during the late 19th and early 20th century and refer to this movement as "First Wave" feminism. More recently, transformations of feminism in the past decade have been referred to as "Third Wave" feminism. However, other feminist scholars object to identifying feminism with these particular moments of political activism, on the grounds that doing so eclipses the fact that there has been resistance to male domination that should be considered "feminist" throughout history and across cultures: One might seek to solve these problems by emphasizing the political ideas that the term was apparently coined to capture, viz. But this too raises controversy, for it frames feminism within a broadly Liberal approach to political and economic life. Although most feminists would probably agree that there is some sense of "rights" on which achieving equal rights for women is a necessary condition for feminism to succeed, most would also argue that this would not be sufficient. Given the controversies over the term "feminism" and the politics of circumscribing the boundaries of a social movement, it is sometimes tempting to think that there is little point in demanding a definition of the term beyond a set of disjuncts that capture different instances. However, at the same time it can be both intellectually and politically valuable to have a schematic framework that enables us to map at least some of our points of agreement and disagreement. For an overview of different philosophical approaches to feminism, see "Feminism, approaches to". Normative and Descriptive Components In many of its forms, feminism seems to involve at least two claims, one normative and the other descriptive. The normative claim concerns how women ought or ought not to be viewed and treated and draws on a background conception of justice or broad moral position; the descriptive claim concerns how women are, as a matter of fact, viewed and treated, alleging that they are not being treated in accordance with the standards of justice or morality invoked in the normative claim. Together the two claims provide reasons for working to change the way things are; hence, feminism is not just an intellectual but also a political movement. So, for example, a Liberal approach of the kind already mentioned might define feminism rather simplistically here in terms of two claims: On this account, that women and men ought to have equal rights and respect is the normative claim; and that women are denied equal rights and respect functions here as the descriptive claim. Admittedly, the claim that women are disadvantaged with respect to rights and respect is not a "purely descriptive" claim since it plausibly involves an evaluative component. However, my point here is simply that claims of this sort concern what is the case not what ought to be the case. Disagreements within feminism can occur with respect to either the descriptive or normative claim, e. Disagreements between feminists and non-feminists can also occur with

respect to both the normative and descriptive claims, e. Others disagree about the background moral or political views. In an effort to suggest a schematic account of feminism, Susan James characterizes feminism as follows: Feminism is grounded on the belief that women are oppressed or disadvantaged by comparison with men, and that their oppression is in some way illegitimate or unjustified. Under the umbrella of this general characterization there are, however, many interpretations of women and their oppression, so that it is a mistake to think of feminism as a single philosophical doctrine, or as implying an agreed political program. James, James seems here to be using the notions of "oppression" and "disadvantage" as placeholders for more substantive accounts of injustice both normative and descriptive over which feminists disagree. Some might prefer to define feminism in terms of a normative claim alone: Of course this qualification might be and is used for various purposes, but one persistent usage seems to follow the qualification with some claim that is hard to distinguish from claims that feminists are wont to make. If we see the identification "feminist" as implicitly committing one to both a normative stance about how things should be and an interpretation of current conditions, it is easy to imagine someone being in the position of wanting to cancel his or her endorsement of either the normative or the descriptive claim. Or one might be willing to acknowledge in a very general way that equality for women is a good thing, without being committed to interpreting particular everyday situations as unjust especially if it is unclear how far these interpretations would have to extend. Feminists, however, at least according to popular discourse, are ready to both adopt a broad account of what justice for women would require and interpret everyday situations as unjust by the standards of that account. Those who explicitly cancel their commitment to feminism may then be happy to endorse some part of the view but are unwilling to endorse what they find to be a problematic package. As mentioned above, there is considerable debate within feminism concerning the normative question: What is the nature of the wrong that feminism seeks to address? Is it that women have been denied equal respect for their differences? Is it all of the above and more? What framework should we employ to identify and address the issues? Feminist philosophers in particular have asked: Do the standard philosophical accounts of justice and morality provide us adequate resources to theorize male domination, or do we need distinctively feminist accounts? Note, however, that by phrasing the task as one of identifying the wrongs women suffer and have suffered, there is an implicit suggestion that women as a group can be usefully compared against men as a group with respect to their standing or position in society; and this seems to suggest that women as a group are treated in the same way, or that they all suffer the same injustices, and men as a group all reap the same advantages. But of course this is not the case, or at least not straightforwardly so. As bell hooks so vividly pointed out, in when Betty Friedan urged women to reconsider the role of housewife and demanded greater opportunities for women to enter the workforce Friedan, Friedan was not speaking for working class women or most women of color hooks, Neither was she speaking for lesbians. Women as a group experience many different forms of injustice, and the sexism they encounter interacts in complex ways with other systems of oppression. In contemporary terms, this is known as the problem of intersectionality Crenshaw This awareness has led some theorists to adopt a different term. Very broadly, then, one might characterize the goal of feminism to be ending the oppression of women. But if we also acknowledge that women are oppressed not just by sexism, but in many ways, e. And some feminists have adopted this interpretation, e. Note, however, that not all agree with such an expansive definition of Feminism. One might agree that feminists ought to work to end all forms of oppression--oppression is unjust and feminists, like everyone else, have a moral obligation to fight injustice--without maintaining that it is the mission of feminism to end all oppression. In other words, opposing oppression in its many forms may be instrumental to, even a necessary means to, feminism, but not intrinsic to it. Feminism, as liberation struggle, must exist apart from and as a part of the larger struggle to eradicate domination in all its forms. We must understand that patriarchal domination shares an ideological foundation with racism and other forms of group oppression, and that there is no hope that it can be eradicated while these systems remain intact. This knowledge should consistently inform the direction of feminist theory and practice. Unlike many feminist comrades, I believe women and men must share a common understanding--a basic knowledge of what feminism is--if it is ever to be a powerful mass-based political movement. For example, feminists who themselves remain racists will not be able to fully appreciate the broad

impact of sexism on the lives of women of color. Furthermore because sexist institutions are also, e. This move shifts the burden of our inquiry from a characterization of what feminism is to a characterization of what sexism, or sexist oppression is. As mentioned above, there are a variety of interpretations--feminist and otherwise--of what exactly oppression consists in, but the leading idea is that oppression consists in "an enclosing structure of forces and barriers which tends to the immobilization and reduction of a group or category of people Frye , Not just any "enclosing structure" is oppressive, however, for plausibly any process of socialization will create a structure that both limits and enables all individuals who live within it. In the case of oppression, however, the "enclosing structures" in question are part of a broader system that asymmetrically and unjustly disadvantages one group and benefits another. It is a crucial feature of contemporary accounts, however, that one cannot assume that members of the privileged group have intentionally designed or maintained the system for their benefit. The oppressive structure may be the result of an historical process whose originators are long gone, or it may be the unintended result of complex cooperative strategies gone wrong. Leaving aside at least for the moment further details in the account of oppression, the question remains: What makes a particular form of oppression sexist? If we just say that a form of oppression counts as sexist oppression if it harms women, or even primarily harms women, this is not enough to distinguish it from other forms of oppression. Virtually all forms of oppression harm women, and arguably some besides sexism harm women primarily though not exclusively , e. What makes a particular form of oppression sexist seems to be not just that it harms women, but that someone is subject to this form of oppression specifically because she is or at least appears to be a woman. The suggestion that sexist oppression consists in oppression to which one is subject by virtue of being or appearing to be a woman provides us at least the beginnings of an analytical tool for distinguishing subordinating structures that happen to affect some or even all women from those that are more specifically sexist. But problems and unclarity remain. First, we need to explicate further what it means to be oppressed "because you are a woman". Is to be oppressed "as a woman" to be oppressed in a particular way? Or can we be pluralists about what sexist oppression consists in without fragmenting the notion beyond usefulness? Two strategies for explicating sexist oppression have proven to be problematic. The first is to maintain that there is a form of oppression common to all women. Although MacKinnon allows that sexual subordination can happen in a myriad of ways, her account is monistic in its attempt to unite the different forms of sexist oppression around a single core account that makes sexual objectification the focus. Although certainly sexual subordination is a factor in sexist oppression, it requires us to fabricate implausible explanations of social life to suppose that all divisions of labor that exploit women as women stem from the "eroticization of dominance and submission". A second problematic strategy has been to consider as paradigms those who are oppressed only as women, with the thought that complex cases bringing in additional forms of oppression will obscure what is distinctive of sexist oppression. This strategy would have us focus in the U. See Spelman , This approach is not only flawed in its exclusion of all but the most elite women in its paradigm, but it assumes that privilege in other areas does not affect the phenomenon under consideration. As Elizabeth Spelman makes the point: In a world in which a woman might be subject to racism, classism, homophobia, anti-Semitism, if she is not so subject it is because of her race, class, religion, sexual orientation. So it can never be the case that the treatment of a woman has only to do with her gender and nothing to do with her class or race. Spelman , Recent accounts of oppression are designed to allow that oppression takes many forms, and refuse to identify one form as more basic or fundamental than the rest. For example, Iris Young describes five "faces" of oppression: Plausibly others should be added to the list. Sexist or racist oppression, for example, will manifest itself in different ways in different contexts, e. Acknowledging this does not go quite far enough, however, for monistic theorists such as MacKinnon could grant this much. In other words, pluralists resist the temptation to "grand social theory," "overarching metanarratives," "monocausal explanations," to allow that the explanation of sexism in a particular historical context will rely on economic, political, legal, and cultural factors that are specific to that context which would prevent the account from being generalized to all instances of sexism Fraser and Nicholson *Feminism as Anti-Sexism* However, if we pursue a pluralist strategy in understanding sexist oppression, what unifies all the instances as instances of sexism? After all, we cannot assume that the oppression in question takes the same form in

different contexts, and we cannot assume that there is an underlying explanation of the different ways it manifests itself.

**Chapter 4 : Feminist theory - Wikipedia**

*This essay offers a very basic introduction to feminist literary theory, and a compendium of Great Writers Inspire resources that can be approached from a feminist perspective.*

Methods employed[ edit ] Feminist scholarship has developed a variety of ways to unpack literature in order to understand its essence through a feminist lens. Gynocriticism was introduced during the time of second wave feminism. The ultimate goal of any of these tools is to uncover and expose patriarchal underlying tensions within novels and interrogate the ways in which our basic literary assumptions about such novels are contingent on female subordination. In this way, the accessibility of literature broadens to a far more inclusive and holistic population. Moreover, works that historically received little or no attention, given the historical constraints around female authorship in some cultures, are able to be heard in their original form and unabridged. This makes a broader collection of literature for all readers insofar as all great works of literature are given exposure without bias towards a gender influenced system. The rise of decadent feminist literature in the s was meant to directly challenge the sexual politics of the patriarchy. By employing a wide range of female sexual exploration and lesbian and queer identities by those like Rita Felski and Judith Bennet, women were able attract more attention about feminist topics in literature. It has also considered gender in the terms of Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis , as part of the deconstruction of existing relations of power, and as a concrete political investment. More specifically, modern feminist criticism deals with those issues related to the perceived intentional and unintentional patriarchal programming within key aspects of society including education, politics and the work force. In it, Woolf argues that in order to write creatively and be critically successful, a woman must be able to own her own space and financial stability. Beginning with the interrogation of male-centric literature that portrayed women in a demeaning and oppressed model, theorist such as Mary Ellman, Kate Millet and Germaine Greer challenged past imaginations of the feminine within literary scholarship. Within second-wave feminism, three phases can be defined: During the feminine phase, female writers adhered to male values. By this time, scholars were not only interested in simply demarcating narratives of oppression but also creating a literary space for past, present and future female literary scholars to substantiate their experience in a genuine way that appreciates the aesthetic form of their works. Additionally, Black literary feminist scholars began to emerge, in the post-Civil Rights era of the United States, as a response to the masculine-centric narratives of Black empowerments began to gain momentum over female voices. An Anthology, edited by Cade is seen as essential to the rise of Black literary criticism and theory. The literary scholarship also included began with the perception of Black female writers being under received relative to their talent. The Combahee River Collective released what is called one of the most famous pieces in Black literary scholarship known as "A Black Feminist Statement" , which sought to prove that literary feminism was an important component to black female liberation. This publication has become a staple of feminist criticism and has expanded the realm of publications considered to be feminist works, especially in the 19th century. The book specifically argues that women have largely been considered in two distinct categories by men in academia, monsters or angels. Today, writers like Gloria E. During that same time, Deborah E. McDowell published *New Directions for Black Feminist Criticism*, which called for a more theoretical school of criticism versus the current writings, which she deemed overly practical. As time moved forward, the theory began to disperse in ideology. Many decided to shift towards the nuanced psychological factors of the Black experience and further away from broad sweeping generalizations. Others began to connect their works to the politics of lesbianism. Some decided to analyze the Black experience through their relationship to the Western world. Regardless, these scholars continue to employ a variety of methods to explore the identity of Black feminism in literature. Currently, several university scholars all employ the usage of literary feminism when critiquing texts. The mainstreaming of this school has given academia an extremely useful tool in raising questions over the gender relationships within texts. Third wave feminism and feminist literary criticism is concerned more with the intersection of race and other feminist concerns. At the same time, new feminist literary critics examine the universal images used by women writers to uncover the

unconscious symbolism women have used to describe themselves, their world, female society across time and nationalities to uncover the specifically feminine language in literature.

## Chapter 5 : Introduction to Modern Literary Theory

*Introduction. A very basic way of thinking about literary theory is that these ideas act as different lenses critics use to view and talk about art, literature, and even culture.*

Upon successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: Access the readings, starting with Dr. Read that section and answer the study questions provided at the end of the section. Following your reading, consider also answering the following questions: What insight does feminist theory provide to the study of literature? What are the differences between the first and second waves of feminism? Reading these sections should take approximately 1 hour. Please respect the copyright and terms of use displayed on the webpages above.

Introduction to Theory of Literature: Watch the minute lecture. After watching the lecture, consider answering the following questions: What are some of the key concepts of classical feminist theory? How does classical feminist theory differ from later forms of feminist theory? Watching this lecture should take approximately 1 hour. Following your reading, consider answering the following question: And what are the strengths that still make this book an effective collaboration with gynocriticism? Completing these readings should take approximately 1 hour.

The University of Toronto: What are some of the key elements of contemporary feminist theory? Completing these readings should take approximately 2 hours. The material from the Glossary of Literary Theory above has been reposted by the kind permission of Greig E. Henderson and Christopher Brown, and can be viewed in its original form [here] <http://www.library.utoronto.ca/glossary/>. Please note that this material is under copyright and cannot be reproduced in any capacity without explicit permission from the copyright holder. Completing these readings should take approximately 1 hour.

How does knowledge of psychosexual development help us to understand the role of women and feminism in the study of literature? Read the two articles on gender theory. As you read, think about how Foucault articulates the relationships among power, sexuality, and the body. Following your reading, consider answering the following questions: In what ways does Foucault help us to think about notions of political identity and autonomy or freedom? Dino Felluga and Dr. To what extent do Dr. Allen suggest that gender is something that is performed? Completing this reading should take approximately 2 hours. Reading these sections should take approximately 1 hour. The material above has been reposted by the kind permission of Greig E. Henderson and Christopher Brown, and can be viewed in its original form here.

Following your reading of Butler, read the two sections from Dr. How is gender performed, according to Butler? Reading these sections should take approximately 2 hours. Read that section and answer the study questions provided at the end of the reading. Is identity entirely structured by society? What are some of the social forces that influence our identities? Watch the minute lecture in which Dr. Fry examines the role of identity politics in the study of literature. How does Fry help us understand the term queer? How does this concept differ from the more common denotation of this word? Where do concepts of sexuality come from? Please respect the copyright and terms of use displayed on the webpage above. After watching this lecture, consider answering the following question: How does Sedgwick challenge the ways in which sexuality is understood in Western culture? Watching this lecture should take approximately 1 hour.

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**Chapter 6 : Feminist Criticism // Purdue Writing Lab**

*Introduction to Literary Theory Introduction Feminist Theory Marxist Theory Psychoanalytic or Freudian Theory Mythological or Archetypal Theory New Historicism.*

When printing this page, you must include the entire legal notice. This material may not be published, reproduced, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed without permission. Use of this site constitutes acceptance of our terms and conditions of fair use. Feminist Criticism s-present Summary: This resource will help you begin the process of understanding literary theory and schools of criticism and how they are used in the academy. Feminist criticism is concerned with " This school of theory looks at how aspects of our culture are inherently patriarchal male dominated and " This misogyny, Tyson reminds us, can extend into diverse areas of our culture: Feminist criticism is also concerned with less obvious forms of marginalization such as the exclusion of women writers from the traditional literary canon: Common Space in Feminist Theories Though a number of different approaches exist in feminist criticism, there exist some areas of commonality. This list is excerpted from Tyson: Women are oppressed by patriarchy economically, politically, socially, and psychologically; patriarchal ideology is the primary means by which women are oppressed. In every domain where patriarchy reigns, woman is other: All of Western Anglo-European civilization is deeply rooted in patriarchal ideology, for example, in the Biblical portrayal of Eve as the origin of sin and death in the world. While biology determines our sex male or female , culture determines our gender scales of masculine and feminine. All feminist activity, including feminist theory and literary criticism, has as its ultimate goal to change the world by prompting gender equality. Gender issues play a part in every aspect of human production and experience, including the production and experience of literature, whether we are consciously aware of these issues or not Feminist criticism has, in many ways, followed what some theorists call the three waves of feminism: Activists like Susan B. Second Wave Feminism - early s-late s: Third Wave Feminism - early s-present: Writers like Alice Walker work to " How is the relationship between men and women portrayed? How are male and female roles defined? What constitutes masculinity and femininity? How do characters embody these traits? Do characters take on traits from opposite genders? What does the work reveal about the operations economically, politically, socially, or psychologically of patriarchy? What does the work imply about the possibilities of sisterhood as a mode of resisting patriarchy? Tyson Here is a list of scholars we encourage you to explore to further your understanding of this theory: Robinson - "Treason out Text: The Androgyne in Literature and Art, Navigation.

**Chapter 7 : Introduction to Feminism, Topics**

*The emphasis here is on general resources useful for doing research in feminist philosophy or interdisciplinary feminist theory, e.g., the links connect to bibliographies and meta-sites, and resources concerning inclusion, exclusion, and feminist diversity.*

Truth argued that if a woman of color can perform tasks that were supposedly limited to men, then any woman of any color could perform those same tasks. After her arrest for illegally voting, Susan B. Anthony gave a speech within court in which she addressed the issues of language within the constitution documented in her publication, "Speech after Arrest for Illegal voting" in Anthony questioned the authoritative principles of the constitution and its male gendered language. She raised the question of why women are accountable to be punished under law but they cannot use the law for their own protection women could not vote, own property, nor themselves in marriage. She also critiqued the constitution for its male gendered language and questioned why women should have to abide by laws that do not specify women. Nancy Cott makes a distinction between modern feminism and its antecedents, particularly the struggle for suffrage. In the United States she places the turning point in the decades before and after women obtained the vote in "She argues that the prior woman movement was primarily about woman as a universal entity, whereas over this year period it transformed itself into one primarily concerned with social differentiation, attentive to individuality and diversity. Politically this represented a shift from an ideological alignment comfortable with the right, to one more radically associated with the left. In this book and her essay, "Woman: For women it is not a question of asserting themselves as women, but of becoming full-scale human beings. Therefore, woman must regain subject, to escape her defined role as "other", as a Cartesian point of departure. Ironically, feminist philosophers have had to extract de Beauvoir herself from out of the shadow of Jean-Paul Sartre to fully appreciate her. The resurgence of feminist activism in the late s was accompanied by an emerging literature of concerns for the earth and spirituality, and environmentalism. This in turn created an atmosphere conducive to reigniting the study of and debate on matricentricity, as a rejection of determinism, such as Adrienne Rich [22] and Marilyn French [23] while for socialist feminists like Evelyn Reed, [24] patriarchy held the properties of capitalism. Feminist psychologists, such as Jean Baker Miller, sought to bring a feminist analysis to previous psychological theories, proving that "there was nothing wrong with women, but rather with the way modern culture viewed them". The first she calls "feminist critique" where the feminist reader examines the ideologies behind literary phenomena. The second Showalter calls "Gynocritics" where the "woman is producer of textual meaning" including "the psychodynamics of female creativity; linguistics and the problem of a female language; the trajectory of the individual or collective female literary career and literary history". She also criticized it for not taking account of the situation for women outside the west. Feminist psychoanalysis deconstructed the phallic hypotheses regarding the Unconscious. Julia Kristeva, Bracha Ettinger and Luce Irigaray developed specific notions concerning unconscious sexual difference, the feminine and motherhood, with wide implications for film and literature analysis. Additionally, these are also debates which shape feminist theory and they can be applied interchangeably in the arguments of feminist theorists.

Bodies[ edit ] In western thought, the body has been historically associated solely with women, whereas men have been associated with the mind. The standard and contemporary sex and gender system[ edit ] The standard sex determination and gender model consists of evidence based on the determined sex and gender of every individual and serve as norms for societal life. Occasionally, mutations occur during the sex-determining process. When this happens, the fetus becomes a hermaphrodite. Studies into biological sex-determining systems also have began working towards connecting certain gender conducts such as behaviors, actions, and desires with sex-determinism. Please help improve it by rewriting it in an encyclopedic style. July Learn how and when to remove this template message The socially-biasing children sex and gender model broadens the horizons of the sex and gender ideologies. It revises the ideology of sex to be a social construct which is not limited to either male or female. Humans today, typically doctors decide how small a penis has to be, or how unusual a combination of parts has to be, before it counts as intersex". The ideology of

gender remains a social construct but is not as strict and fixed. Instead, gender is easily malleable, and is forever changing. In conclusion, the contemporary sex gender model is accurate because both sex and gender are rightly seen as social constructs inclusive of the wide spectrum of sexes and genders and in which nature and nurture are interconnected.

**Epistemologies[ edit ]** The generation and production of knowledge has been an important part of feminist theory and is at the centre of discussions on feminist epistemology. It theorizes that from personal experience comes knowledge which helps each individual look at things from a different insight. Central to feminism is that women are systematically subordinated, and bad faith exists when women surrender their agency to this subordination, e.

**Intersectionality** Intersectionality is the examination of various ways in which people are oppressed, based on the relational web of dominating factors of race, sex, class, nation and sexual orientation. Intersectionality "describes the simultaneous, multiple, overlapping, and contradictory systems of power that shape our lives and political options". While this theory can be applied to all people, and more particularly all women, it is specifically mentioned and studied within the realms of black feminism. Patricia Hill Collins argues that black women in particular, have a unique perspective on the oppression of the world as unlike white women, they face both racial and gender oppression simultaneously, among other factors. This debate raises the issue of understanding the oppressive lives of women that are not only shaped by gender alone but by other elements such as racism, classism, ageism, heterosexism, ableism etc.

**Feminist language reform , Gender-neutral language , and Category:** Such masculinized language that feminist theorists address is the use of, for example, "God the Father" which is looked upon as a way of designating the sacred as solely men or, in other words, biblical language glorifies men through all of the masculine pronouns like "he" and "him" and addressing God as a "He". Feminist theorists attempt to reclaim and redefine women through re-structuring language. For example, feminist theorists have used the term "womyn " instead of "women". Some feminist theorists find solace in changing titles of unisex jobs for example, police officer versus policeman or mail carrier versus mailman. Some feminist theorists have reclaimed and redefined such words as " dyke " and " bitch " and others have invested redefining knowledge into feminist dictionaries.

**Psychology[ edit ]** Feminist psychology is a form of psychology centered on societal structures and gender. Feminist psychology critiques the fact that historically psychological research has been done from a male perspective with the view that males are the norm. It incorporates gender and the ways women are affected by issues resulting from it. Ethel Dench Puffer Howes was one of the first women to enter the field of psychology. One major psychological theory, relational-cultural theory , is based on the work of Jean Baker Miller , whose book *Toward a New Psychology of Women* proposes that "growth-fostering relationships are a central human necessity and that disconnections are the source of psychological problems".

**Psychoanalysis and Feminism and the Oedipus complex** Psychoanalytic feminism and feminist psychoanalysis are based on Freud and his psychoanalytic theories , but they also supply an important critique of it. It maintains that gender is not biological but is based on the psycho-sexual development of the individual, but also that sexual difference and gender are different notions. Psychoanalytical feminists believe that gender inequality comes from early childhood experiences, which lead men to believe themselves to be masculine , and women to believe themselves feminine. It is further maintained that gender leads to a social system that is dominated by males, which in turn influences the individual psycho-sexual development. As a solution it was suggested by some to avoid the gender-specific structuring of the society coeducation. Other feminist psychoanalysts and feminist theorists whose contributions have enriched the field through an engagement with psychoanalysis are Jessica Benjamin , [48] Jacqueline Rose , [49] Ranjana Khanna , [50] and Shoshana Felman.

**Chapter 8 : Feminist Literary Criticism and Theory**

*Feminist Theory is an aspect of considering feminism as having been based on socio-phenomenon issues rather than biological or scientific. It appreciates gender inequality, analyzes the societal roles played by feminists in a bid to promote the interests, issues and rights of women in the society.*

Literary and Cultural Theory 1. What Is Literary Theory? Literary theory refers to any principles derived from internal analysis of literary texts or from knowledge external to the text that can be applied in multiple interpretive situations. All critical practice regarding literature depends on an underlying structure of ideas in at least two ways: Critics that explain the climactic drowning of Edna Pontellier in *The Awakening* as a suicide generally call upon a supporting architecture of feminist and gender theory. The structure of ideas that enables criticism of a literary work may or may not be acknowledged by the critic, and the status of literary theory within the academic discipline of literary studies continues to evolve. Literary theory and the formal practice of literary interpretation runs a parallel but less well known course with the history of philosophy and is evident in the historical record at least as far back as Plato. Modern literary theory gradually emerges in Europe during the nineteenth century. In one of the earliest developments of literary theory, German "higher criticism" subjected biblical texts to a radical historicizing that broke with traditional scriptural interpretation. This dispute was taken up anew by the French theorist Roland Barthes in his famous declaration of the "Death of the Author. Attention to the etymology of the term "theory," from the Greek "theoria," alerts us to the partial nature of theoretical approaches to literature. This is precisely what literary theory offers, though specific theories often claim to present a complete system for understanding literature. The current state of theory is such that there are many overlapping areas of influence, and older schools of theory, though no longer enjoying their previous eminence, continue to exert an influence on the whole. The once widely-held conviction an implicit theory that literature is a repository of all that is meaningful and ennobling in the human experience, a view championed by the Leavis School in Britain, may no longer be acknowledged by name but remains an essential justification for the current structure of American universities and liberal arts curricula. The moment of "Deconstruction" may have passed, but its emphasis on the indeterminacy of signs that we are unable to establish exclusively what a word means when used in a given situation and thus of texts, remains significant. Many critics may not embrace the label "feminist," but the premise that gender is a social construct, one of theoretical feminisms distinguishing insights, is now axiomatic in a number of theoretical perspectives. While literary theory has always implied or directly expressed a conception of the world outside the text, in the twentieth century three movements—"Marxist theory" of the Frankfurt School, "Feminism," and "Postmodernism"—have opened the field of literary studies into a broader area of inquiry. Marxist approaches to literature require an understanding of the primary economic and social bases of culture since Marxist aesthetic theory sees the work of art as a product, directly or indirectly, of the base structure of society. Feminist thought and practice analyzes the production of literature and literary representation within the framework that includes all social and cultural formations as they pertain to the role of women in history. Postmodern thought consists of both aesthetic and epistemological strands. Postmodernism in art has included a move toward non-referential, non-linear, abstract forms; a heightened degree of self-referentiality; and the collapse of categories and conventions that had traditionally governed art. Postmodern thought has led to the serious questioning of the so-called metanarratives of history, science, philosophy, and economic and sexual reproduction. Under postmodernity, all knowledge comes to be seen as "constructed" within historical self-contained systems of understanding. Marxist, feminist, and postmodern thought have brought about the incorporation of all human discourses that is, interlocking fields of language and knowledge as a subject matter for analysis by the literary theorist. Using the various poststructuralist and postmodern theories that often draw on disciplines other than the literary—linguistic, anthropological, psychoanalytic, and philosophical—for their primary insights, literary theory has become an interdisciplinary body of cultural theory. Taking as its premise that human societies and knowledge consist of texts in one form or another, cultural theory for better or worse is now applied to the varieties of texts, ambitiously undertaking to become

the preeminent model of inquiry into the human condition. Literary theory is a site of theories: The other schools of literary theory, to varying degrees, embrace a postmodern view of language and reality that calls into serious question the objective referent of literary studies. The following categories are certainly not exhaustive, nor are they mutually exclusive, but they represent the major trends in literary theory of this century. Traditional Literary Criticism Academic literary criticism prior to the rise of "New Criticism" in the United States tended to practice traditional literary history: Literary biography was and still is an important interpretive method in and out of the academy; versions of moral criticism, not unlike the Leavis School in Britain, and aesthetic e. Perhaps the key unifying feature of traditional literary criticism was the consensus within the academy as to the both the literary canon that is, the books all educated persons should read and the aims and purposes of literature. What literature was, and why we read literature, and what we read, were questions that subsequent movements in literary theory were to raise. Formalism and New Criticism "Formalism" is, as the name implies, an interpretive approach that emphasizes literary form and the study of literary devices within the text. The work of the Formalists had a general impact on later developments in "Structuralism" and other theories of narrative. The Formalists placed great importance on the literariness of texts, those qualities that distinguished the literary from other kinds of writing. Neither author nor context was essential for the Formalists; it was the narrative that spoke, the "hero-function," for example, that had meaning. Form was the content. A plot device or narrative strategy was examined for how it functioned and compared to how it had functioned in other literary works. The Formalist adage that the purpose of literature was "to make the stones stonier" nicely expresses their notion of literariness. Literary language, partly by calling attention to itself as language, estranged the reader from the familiar and made fresh the experience of daily life. The "New Criticism," so designated as to indicate a break with traditional methods, was a product of the American university in the s and 40s. Eliot, though not explicitly associated with the movement, expressed a similar critical-aesthetic philosophy in his essays on John Donne and the metaphysical poets, writers who Eliot believed experienced a complete integration of thought and feeling. Wimsatt placed a similar focus on the metaphysical poets and poetry in general, a genre well suited to New Critical practice. Perhaps the enduring legacy of "New Criticism" can be found in the college classroom, in which the verbal texture of the poem on the page remains a primary object of literary study. Marxism and Critical Theory Marxist literary theories tend to focus on the representation of class conflict as well as the reinforcement of class distinctions through the medium of literature. Marxist theorists use traditional techniques of literary analysis but subordinate aesthetic concerns to the final social and political meanings of literature. Marxist theorist often champion authors sympathetic to the working classes and authors whose work challenges economic equalities found in capitalist societies. In keeping with the totalizing spirit of Marxism, literary theories arising from the Marxist paradigm have not only sought new ways of understanding the relationship between economic production and literature, but all cultural production as well. Marxist analyses of society and history have had a profound effect on literary theory and practical criticism, most notably in the development of "New Historicism" and "Cultural Materialism. Walter Benjamin broke new ground in his work in his study of aesthetics and the reproduction of the work of art. The Frankfurt School of philosophers, including most notably Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, and Herbert Marcuseâ€”after their emigration to the United Statesâ€”played a key role in introducing Marxist assessments of culture into the mainstream of American academic life. These thinkers became associated with what is known as "Critical theory," one of the constituent components of which was a critique of the instrumental use of reason in advanced capitalist culture. Eagleton is known both as a Marxist theorist and as a popularizer of theory by means of his widely read overview, *Literary Theory*. Lentricchia likewise became influential through his account of trends in theory, *After the New Criticism*. Jameson is a more diverse theorist, known both for his impact on Marxist theories of culture and for his position as one of the leading figures in theoretical postmodernism. Structuralism and Poststructuralism Like the "New Criticism," "Structuralism" sought to bring to literary studies a set of objective criteria for analysis and a new intellectual rigor. Like Plato, Saussure regarded the signifier words, marks, symbols as arbitrary and unrelated to the concept, the signified, to which it referred. Within the way a particular society uses language and signs, meaning was constituted by a system of

"differences" between units of the language. Particular meanings were of less interest than the underlying structures of signification that made meaning itself possible, often expressed as an emphasis on "langue" rather than "parole." Greimas, Gerard Genette, and Barthes. The philosopher Roland Barthes proved to be a key figure on the divide between "Structuralism" and "Poststructuralism." The most important theorist of "Deconstruction," Jacques Derrida, has asserted, "There is no getting outside text," indicating a kind of free play of signification in which no fixed, stable meaning is possible. Other tendencies in the moment after "Deconstruction" that share some of the intellectual tendencies of "Poststructuralism" would include the "Reader response" theories of Stanley Fish, Jane Tompkins, and Wolfgang Iser. Lacanian psychoanalysis, an updating of the work of Sigmund Freud, extends "Poststructuralism" to the human subject with further consequences for literary theory. According to Lacan, the fixed, stable self is a Romantic fiction; like the text in "Deconstruction," the self is a decentered mass of traces left by our encounter with signs, visual symbols, language, etc. Barthes applies these currents of thought in his famous declaration of the "death" of the Author: Foucault played a critical role in the development of the postmodern perspective that knowledge is constructed in concrete historical situations in the form of discourse; knowledge is not communicated by discourse but is discourse itself, can only be encountered textually. Following Nietzsche, Foucault performs what he calls "genealogies," attempts at deconstructing the unacknowledged operation of power and knowledge to reveal the ideologies that make domination of one group by another seem "natural." New Historicism and Cultural Materialism "New Historicism," a term coined by Stephen Greenblatt, designates a body of theoretical and interpretive practices that began largely with the study of early modern literature in the United States. According to "New Historicism," the circulation of literary and non-literary texts produces relations of social power within a culture. New Historicist thought differs from traditional historicism in literary studies in several crucial ways. According to "New Historicism," we can only know the textual history of the past because it is "embedded," a key term, in the textuality of the present and its concerns. Text and context are less clearly distinct in New Historicist practice. Traditional separations of literary and non-literary texts, "great" literature and popular literature, are also fundamentally challenged. For the "New Historicist," all acts of expression are embedded in the material conditions of a culture. Texts are examined with an eye for how they reveal the economic and social realities, especially as they produce ideology and represent power or subversion. Louis Montrose, another major innovator and exponent of "New Historicism," describes a fundamental axiom of the movement as an intellectual belief in "the textuality of history and the historicity of texts. The translation of the work of Mikhail Bakhtin on carnival coincided with the rise of the "New Historicism" and "Cultural Materialism" and left a legacy in work of other theorists of influence like Peter Stallybrass and Jonathan Dollimore. In its period of ascendancy during the 1980s, "New Historicism" drew criticism from the political left for its depiction of counter-cultural expression as always co-opted by the dominant discourses. However, "New Historicism" continues to exercise a major influence in the humanities and in the extended conception of literary studies. Ethnic Studies and Postcolonial Criticism "Ethnic Studies," sometimes referred to as "Minority Studies," has an obvious historical relationship with "Postcolonial Criticism" in that Euro-American imperialism and colonization in the last four centuries, whether external empire or internal slavery has been directed at recognizable ethnic groups: Though the two fields are increasingly finding points of intersection—the work of bell hooks, for example—and are both activist intellectual enterprises, "Ethnic Studies" and "Postcolonial Criticism" have significant differences in their history and ideas. Dubois, we find an early attempt to theorize the position of African-Americans within dominant white culture through his concept of "double consciousness," a dual identity including both "American" and "Negro." Afro-Caribbean and African writers—Aime Cesaire, Frantz Fanon, Chinua Achebe—have made significant early contributions to the theory and practice of ethnic criticism that explores the traditions, sometimes suppressed or underground, of ethnic literary activity while providing a critique of representations of ethnic identity as found within the majority culture. Ethnic and minority literary theory emphasizes the relationship of cultural identity to individual identity in historical circumstances of overt racial oppression. More recently, scholars and writers such as Henry Louis Gates, Toni Morrison, and Kwame Anthony Appiah have brought attention to the problems inherent in applying theoretical models derived from

Euro-centric paradigms that is, structures of thought to minority works of literature while at the same time exploring new interpretive strategies for understanding the vernacular common speech traditions of racial groups that have been historically marginalized by dominant cultures. Said argues that the concept of "the Orient" was produced by the "imaginative geography" of Western scholarship and has been instrumental in the colonization and domination of non-Western societies. Moreover, theorists like Homi K. The work of Gayatri C. Spivak has focused attention on the question of who speaks for the colonial "Other" and the relation of the ownership of discourse and representation to the development of the postcolonial subjectivity. Like feminist and ethnic theory, "Postcolonial Criticism" pursues not merely the inclusion of the marginalized literature of colonial peoples into the dominant canon and discourse. In this respect, "Postcolonial Criticism" is activist and adversarial in its basic aims. Postcolonial theory has brought fresh perspectives to the role of colonial peoples—their wealth, labor, and culture—in the development of modern European nation states. While "Postcolonial Criticism" emerged in the historical moment following the collapse of the modern colonial empires, the increasing globalization of culture, including the neo-colonialism of multinational capitalism, suggests a continued relevance for this field of inquiry. Gender Studies and Queer Theory Gender theory came to the forefront of the theoretical scene first as feminist theory but has subsequently come to include the investigation of all gender and sexual categories and identities. Feminist gender theory followed slightly behind the reemergence of political feminism in the United States and Western Europe during the s. These causes converged with early literary feminist practice, characterized by Elaine Showalter as "gynocriticism," which emphasized the study and canonical inclusion of works by female authors as well as the depiction of women in male-authored canonical texts. Feminist gender theory is postmodern in that it challenges the paradigms and intellectual premises of western thought, but also takes an activist stance by proposing frequent interventions and alternative epistemological positions meant to change the social order.

**Chapter 9 : Ellen Moers: An Introduction to Literary Theory and Criticism**

*Feminist literary criticism includes feminist, literary and criticism. The word of feminist connects closely with feminism, a theory of equality suggests equality between men and women in politics, economic and social, and women's needs (Molieono in Tome, ).*

It provides suggestions for how material on the Great Writers Inspire site can be used as a starting point for exploration of or classroom discussion about feminist approaches to literature. Questions for reflection or discussion are highlighted in the text. Links in the text point to resources in the Great Writers Inspire site. Further material can be found via our library and via the various authors and theme pages. The A-level context For both the A2 Reflections in Literary Studies unit and the extended comparative essay, it is helpful to approach a collection of texts from a thematic rather than period or writer-based approach. Gynocriticism involves three major aspects. The first is the examination of female writers and their place in literary history. The second is the consideration of the treatment of female characters in books by both male and female writers. The third and most important aspect of gynocriticism is the discovery and exploration of a canon of literature written by women; gynocriticism seeks to appropriate a female literary tradition. Female writers often employed male pseudonyms during this period. Rather, it was assumed that the works of a women writer were authentic and valid. The female phase lacked the anger and combative consciousness of the feminist phase. How does your favourite female writer fit into these phases? Read Jane Eyre with the madwoman thesis in mind. How does it change your view of the novel to consider Bertha as an alter ego for Jane, unencumbered by societal norms? How do they differ from his licentious behaviour? French feminists postulate the existence of a separate language belonging to women that consists of loose, digressive sentences written without use of the ego. How does Jane Austen fit into French Feminism? How do more modern A-level set texts, like those of Margaret Atwood, Zora Neale Hurston, or Maya Angelou, fit into any of these traditions of criticism? Depictions of Women by Men Students could begin approaching Great Writers Inspire by considering the range of women depicted in early English literature: How might the reign of Queen Elizabeth I have dictated the way Elizabethan writers were permitted to present women? How did each male poet handle the challenge of depicting women? The heroine was a man playing a woman dressed as a man. What are the differences between depictions of women written by male and female novelists? Rise of the Woman Writer With the movement from Renaissance to Restoration theatre, the depiction of women on stage changed dramatically, in no small part because women could portray women for the first time. The essay Who is Aphra Behn? Behn created an obstacle for later women writers in that her scandalous life did little to undermine the perception that women writing for money were little better than whores. In what position did that place chaste female novelists like Frances Burney or Jane Austen? Gender and Sexuality can provide crucial background for any study of women in Victorian literature. How did class barriers affect the work of 18th century kitchen maid and poet Mary Leapor? Also see sections on the following writers: