



# **TRINITY COLLEGE FOR WOMEN NAMAKKAL**

**Department of English**

**FEMINIST WRITING**

**19UEN09 -ODD Semester**

**Presented by**

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# FEMINIST WRITING

- **Feminist literature** is fiction, nonfiction, drama, or poetry, which supports the feminist goals of defining, establishing, and defending equal civil, political, economic, and social rights for women.
- It often identifies women's roles as unequal to those of men – particularly as regarding status, privilege, and power – and generally portrays the consequences to women, men, families, communities, and societies as undesirable.

# FEMINIST WRITING

- Not all feminist literature has been written by women, but also by men who understood women beyond the roles they were expected to fit into, and delved into their psyche to understand their needs and desires.
- Some works may be fictional, while others may be non fictional.
- Here, we take a look into the characteristics of feminist literature, and give you a list of some of the many works of this genre that make for a good read if you truly desire to learn extensively about this form of writing and what it stood for.

# CHARACTERISTICS OF FEMINIST WRITING

- Feminist literature is identified by the characteristics of the feminist movement.
- Authors of feminist literature are known to understand and explain the difference between sex and gender.
- They believe that though a person's sex is predetermined and natural, it is the gender that has been created by society, along with a particular perception about gender roles.
- Gender roles, they believe, can be altered over time.
- The predominance of one gender over the other is a common concept across almost all societies, and the fact that it is not in favor of women is an underlying yet blatant characteristic of feminist or women's literature.
- Critics argue that there wasn't much difference between male and female authors, and that there was no need to identify a separate class of literature termed as feminist or look for traces of feminism in literature.
- However, if you read any such work, you will realize how such writers criticized society's androcentric (male-centered) approach and tried to understand the beliefs and needs of the opposite sex with a subjective, and not an objective, approach.

# FEMINIST CRITICS

Virginia Woolf

Margaret Atwood

Jane Austen

Audre Lorde

Phyllis Reynolds Naylor

Jeannette Winterson

Octavia Butler

Ursula Le Guin

Angela Carter

Grace Paley

Aimee Bender

Edwidge Danticat

Suzan Lori-Parks

Wendy Wasserstein

# FEMINIST WORKS

Some famous works of feminist literature, that include both non-fiction and fiction writing have been enlisted here.

1. *Feminism Is for Everybody: Passionate Politics* – Bell Hooks
2. *A Room of One's Own* – Virginia Woolf
3. *The Handmaid's Tale* – Margaret Atwood
4. *The Feminine Mystique* – Betty Friedan
5. *Women Without Superstition: No Gods, No Masters* – Annie Laurie Gaylor
6. *Feminist Fairy Tales* – Barbara G. Walker
7. *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism* – Bell Hooks
8. *The Adventure of the Black Lady* – Aphra Behn

# EXEMPLARY WORKS

- *The Story of An Hour* by Kate Chopin. This provocative story may have kicked-off "modern" feminist lit. Here's [The Story of An Hour - Study Guide](#).
- *The Awakening*, also by Kate Chopin about a woman's discovery of her own sexual needs and desire for independence, caused Chopin to be ostracized and question her confidence as a writer, shortly after it was published in 1899. (Fortunate for us, she went on to create an incredible canon of masterful short stories).
- *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* by Mary Wollstonecraft, considered the "mother of feminism" argues in her famous work published in 1792 that women are not inferior to men by nature, but lack education. Reason should be the basis of social order to achieve equality.



- *The Yellow Wallpaper* by Charlotte Perkins Gilman is a powerful call to change the public's perception about women's rights to make decisions about their own health and medical treatment. She offers a fascinating account of the work's impact in *Why I Wrote the Yellow Wallpaper*.
- *The Declaration of Sentiments*, Seneca Falls Convention, New York (1848) by Elizabeth Cady Stanton articulated the many grievances against women, galvanizing the women's suffrage movement calling for equal rights of women.
- *A Trip to Cuba* by Julia Ward Howe, an abolitionist, poet, and travel writer, best remembered for penning the Union's most popular song during the American Civil War, *The Battle Hymn of the Republic*, traveled independently to mysterious places of the time, such as Cuba in 1860, opening the eyes of many Americans in her bold observations about the complexities of slavery, communism, and revolution, at a time when her own country was on the brink of civil war. The book remained banished in Cuba for years as "dangerous and incendiary material."



# FAMOUS QUOTES

*"We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal."*  
-- *The Declaration of Sentiments*, Elizabeth Cady Stanton,

*"He could see plainly that she was not herself. That is, he could not see that she was becoming herself and daily casting aside that fictitious self which we assume like a garment with which to appear before the world."*  
-- *The Awakening*, Kate Chopin,

*"Therefore I would ask you to write all kinds of books, hesitating at no subject however trivial or however vast. By hook or by crook, I hope that you will possess yourselves of money enough to travel and to idle, to contemplate the future or the past of the world, to dream over books and loiter at street corners and let the line of thought dip deep into the stream."*

-- *A Room of One's Own*, Virginia Woolf

*"I do not wish them [women] to have power over men; but over themselves."*  
-- *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, Mary Wollstonecraft

# THANK YOU

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