

## Minority Feminisms and Fiction Post-1970

50-word abstract: This panel explores the intersection of feminism and marginality, investigating the way in which Leslie Marmon Silko and other women authors in minority traditions investigate, challenge, and update the concerns of mainstream feminism.

### Description:

In this panel, we invite discussion participants to share their ideas on literary criticism's new F-word: feminism. In light of the conference theme and setting, we are particularly interested in the intersection of feminism with axes of marginality including race/ethnicity, class, sexuality, and gender identity. Our panel participants have in mind the work of Leslie Marmon Silko, particularly her short story and companion essay "Yellow Woman," Margaret Atwood's "The Handmaid's Tale," and the novels of Toni Morrison, but we invite references to literary works by many different authors.

We plan to pose the following questions to panelists and the audience and to provide support with passages from Silko.

1. Is feminism just for privileged white women? In what ways do authors who come from various minorities respond to "second wave" and "third wave" feminism? In what ways are they included or left out?
2. How do we understand the concept of minority, and how does it apply to these writers?
3. Are all works that represent the experience of women in a nuanced way "feminist"? Why or why not?
4. How do women writers (especially minority women writers) represent female characters' experience of cultural change and social displacement?
5. We notice that female characters are often positioned as outsiders, even in their home communities. How is the experience of being "outside" or "different" fundamental to the search for women's agency or empowerment?
6. How do women in these texts go about building communities or changing their communities over time? Are there common strategies? Are these strategies different in texts originating from a dominant culture versus texts originating from a minority culture?
7. How do these writers contest the media stereotyping of "white," "brown," and "yellow" women?

### Participants:

1. Jenny Schollaert, Chatham University, Alpha Delta Lambda Chapter, [ear@wordbynature.org](mailto:ear@wordbynature.org)
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