

# A literature of their own british women novelists from bronte to lessing elai

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Twenty Years on: A Literature of Their Own Revisited\*\*

In 1977, Elaine Showalter published "A Literature of Their Own," a landmark work in feminist literary criticism that analyzed the history and development of women's writing. Revisiting this text twenty years later, Showalter reflected on the progress and challenges faced by women writers and scholars in the intervening decades.

### **Elaine Showalter's Views on Women and Writing**

Showalter argues that women have faced unique challenges in the literary world, often being marginalized and excluded from the male-dominated canon. She believes that women's experiences, perspectives, and styles of writing have been devalued and that a "female tradition" of writing has been suppressed.

### **Major Works of Elaine Showalter**

- "A Literature of Their Own" (1977)
- "Writing and Sexual Difference" (1982)
- "Toward a Feminist Poetics" (1989)
- "The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Culture, 1830-1980" (1985)

### **Themes of 20th Century Literature**

Showalter identifies several recurring themes in 20th-century literature:

- Modernism and experimentation
- The rise of feminism
- The exploration of subjectivity and identity
- The impact of war and trauma

### **Three Phases of Female Writing**

According to Showalter, female writing has progressed through three distinct phases:

- The Feminine: Emphasizes domesticity and traditional roles
- The Feminist: Challenges male authority and explores women's independence
- The Gynocentric: Celebrates female experience and values

### **Summary of Elaine Showalter Towards a Feminist Poetics**

In "Towards a Feminist Poetics," Showalter argues for a critical approach that centers on women's texts as autonomous works of art. She proposes a set of questions for feminist critics to consider when analyzing female writing:

- How does the text challenge or reinforce gender norms?
- What are the author's unique experiences and perspectives as a woman?
- How does the text contribute to a female tradition of writing?

### **Four Models of Feminism by Elaine Showalter**

Showalter identifies four models of feminism:

- Liberal: Focuses on equality and individual rights
- Marxist: Examines the economic and social structures that oppress women
- Psychoanalytic: Explores the unconscious and subconscious factors that shape women's lives
- Radical: Advocates for a complete restructuring of society to eliminate gender inequality

## Elaine Showalter's Definition of Gynocriticism

Gynocriticism is a critical approach that focuses on women's writing as a distinct corpus with its own unique characteristics. Showalter argues that gynocritics should analyze not only the themes and forms of women's texts but also the ways in which they have been marginalized and suppressed.

## Importance of Elaine Showalter

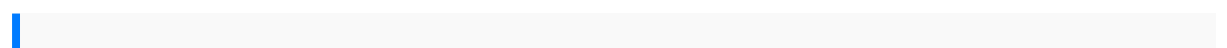
Elaine Showalter is an influential feminist critic whose work has helped to reshape the study of literature. Her groundbreaking research on women's writing has paved the way for new perspectives and approaches to literary analysis.

## Father of Feminist Criticism

Mary Ellmann is considered the father of feminist criticism. Her 1968 book "Thinking About Women" is a seminal work in the field that explores the ways in which women's experiences are represented and interpreted in literature.

## Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness Showalter

In "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness," Showalter argues that feminist literary criticism has faced challenges and setbacks in recent years. She calls for a renewed commitment to feminist principles and a broader understanding of what constitutes women's writing.



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