

WOMEN-WRITERS IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

This thesis highlights the important role of women writers in crafting narratives, defying societal conventions, and changing literary landscapes in English literature. This research examines women writers' unique voices, views, and themes through a comprehensive analysis of selected works from various times, genres, and cultures. This thesis highlights women writers' perseverance and ingenuity in overcoming patriarchal norms by studying the historical backdrop, cultural restraints, and literary movements that shaped their writing. It also examines how women writers have expanded English literature and enriched its tapestry with their individual ideas and experiences. This thesis promotes women writers' literary contributions through literary theory, feminist critique, and cultural studies.

Keywords: Women writers, English literature, feminism, literary canon, narrative, gender studies

INTRODUCTION

This introduction opens up the topic of women's impact on English literature. It begins by acknowledging women writers' historical marginalisation in literature and emphasising the need to enhance their voices. It then describes this thesis's goal of examining women writers' diverse contributions across periods, genres, and cultures. It also describes the process, using literary theory, feminist critique, and cultural studies to show women's writing's complexity.

This introduction also places the study in the larger scholarly conversation on gender, literature, and feminism, emphasising the importance of including women's perspectives in literature. This thesis contextualises historical and socio-cultural elements that have affected women's writing to show their resilience, originality, and transformative potential.

FINDINGS

Historically, social, cultural, and political issues have affected women's access to education, publication, and literary recognition in English literature. Women were marginalised in literary discourse for most of history due to societal impediments to intellectual and artistic pursuits. Despite these challenges, women have written a

wonderful amount of literature that reflects their different experiences, viewpoints, and aspirations.

During the mediaeval period, women's literary contributions were mostly religious, with renowned people like Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe publishing spiritual works and autobiographical stories. These ladies were typically patronised by religious institutions, allowing them to write and think in the cloister.

The Renaissance saw certain advancements for women writers, particularly in the aristocracy and upper classes. Mary Wroth and Elizabeth Cary were recognised for their poetry and plays within gender norms. Most women had limited access to formal education and publication, limiting their literary culture participation.

The 18th and 19th centuries saw the rise of the novel and the Enlightenment, opening up new creative options for women. Aphra Behn, Frances Burney, and Jane Austen was lauded for their works that challenged social standards and examined gender, class, and identity. Women writers still faced prejudice and censure, therefore many published anonymously or under male pseudonyms.

The Victorian Era saw a rise in women's writing in poetry, fiction, and non-fiction. Authors like the Brontë sisters, George Eliot, and Elizabeth Gaskell defied gender stereotypes and tackled societal concerns including poverty, marriage, and women's rights. Their labour was often morally criticised and deemed inferior to that of men.

During the Modernist Period, writers like Virginia Woolf, Katherine Mansfield, and Djuna Barnes revolutionised literary form and style in the early 20th century. These women challenged narrative conventions by exploring awareness, subjectivity, and identity. Women writers were marginalised in literary circles despite their innovations.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion, women in English literature have a mixed history of growth and limitation. Women writers have challenged norms, expanded literary boundaries, and shaped the cultural imagination despite systematic impediments and institutionalised sexism. We can better understand women authors' tenacity, originality, and transformative power by studying their literary history.

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