

## Literary Interpretation of Feminism

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**Abstract.** This article focuses on the rise of feminism in literature, its different stages of development, and the works of writers who contributed to this movement. Feminism sheds light on the character of women, the challenges they face, and how to fight against and overcome these difficulties. Literature plays a crucial role in interpreting such issues and calling for action.

**Key words:** *Story, feminism, gender inequality, gender stereotypes, style, plot, development of events, symbolism, image, character, motive, tradition.*

### Introduction

It is widely known that feminism originated in Europe towards the end of the 18th century. This movement came to be a result of the violation of women's rights, gender inequality, and the lack of status of women in society. By the feminist movement, we mean the collective political, social, and cultural actions taken by women to achieve equality in society. It is worth noting that even in Western countries, women did not have any rights at that time. Specifically, women were not allowed to vote, study at higher educational institutions, work in any position, or engage in trade. Feminism emerged among women as an effort to attain gender equality and restore women's rights in society. To achieve their objectives, women established several social groups that began functioning effectively. In Western societies, the feminist movement is typically categorized into four "waves," each with distinct goals:

1. The first wave of feminism (19th and early 20th centuries) was aimed at women's right to vote and own property.
2. The second wave of feminism (mid and late-20th century) focused on achieving reproductive rights and women's freedom. We can see this not only in the social and political life of that time but also in world literature.
3. The third wave (late 1980s - early 2000s) focused on criticizing oppression and discrimination against women in the political, economic and cultural spheres.
4. The fourth wave (starting in the 2010s) focused on efforts to combat violence and violence against women.

It is noteworthy that numerous women writers have produced works based on feminist ideas. Some of these writers have become renowned figures in world literature and have made an unforgettable impact. These writers include Katherine Mansfield, Jane Austen, Charlotte Bronte,

Jean Rhys, Margaret Atwood, Bernadine Everisto, Anne Bradstreet, Christina Rossetti, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Caryl Churchill, and Alice Walker.

Feminist ideas have been present in literature for a long time, predating the emergence of feminist movements. Although writing was considered a male activity, women writers like the Brontë sisters published stories under pseudonyms. Any written text that supports feminist beliefs or the belief in women's equality in political, social, economic, and cultural aspects can be considered feminist literature. The term "feminist" is associated with the feminist movement.

In this article, we will discuss some of the works written from a feminist perspective that highlight the unjust oppression faced by women in various fields of society. Many writers have contributed to this cause, and we will focus on a few of them. Charlotte Brontë, an English writer, is one of these writers, and she is known for her famous works such as *Jane Eyre* (1847), *Shirley* (1849), *Villette* (1853), and *Emma* (unfinished).

Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* is a clear example of feminist literature. Because women could not create freely, and openly, Charlotte Brontë published this work under the pseudonym "Currer Bell". The short story "Jane Eyre" is about the future fate of a little girl who was left an orphan by her parents, the difficulties she faces during her life, and how she overcomes them. After the death of her parents, Jane has to live with her uncle's wife and children. But, unfortunately, they humiliate her a lot without liking her, and push her. Later, she was sent to a boarding school. Jane Eyre graduates from school and becomes a teacher. She comes to live in the house of Mr. Rochester to tutor his daughter. In this way, love arises between them. But Jane Eyre notices and witnesses strange events while living in Mr. Rochester's house. Rochester's wife is not dead, but insane, and her husband is taking care of her in the cell. In the novel *Jane Eyre*, the protagonist discovers a shocking truth that leads her to leave home. However, her love interest, Mr Rochester, apologises for his deceit and brings her back home. Even Jane's cousins, who mistreated her in the past, also apologise for their actions. This highlights the author's message that those who discriminate against women will face remorse and appropriate consequences for their actions. Furthermore, the novel portrays the strength and intelligence of women, demonstrating how they can transform from delicate flowers into powerful forces when necessary.

Katherine Mansfield was a writer who focused on feminist themes in her works. Her stories predominantly featured female protagonists and aimed to depict the struggles of women who faced discrimination and difficulties in their lives. Some of her notable works include "In a German Pension" (1911), "Prelude" (1918), "Bliss" (1920), "The Garden Party" (1922), "Poems" (1923), and "The Dove's Nest" (1923), as well as "Something Childish" (1924), "The Letters" (1928-1929), and "The Notebooks" (1997). One of her stories, "The Tiredness of Rosabel," is particularly significant as it was written in a feminist spirit. The story follows Rosabel, a saleswoman in a clothing store, and explores her life and thoughts from the beginning to the end. The protagonist of the story lives in poverty and dreams of living a life free of financial difficulties like a wealthy woman. She is envious of a couple that visits her store and imagines herself in the woman's place, feeling happy in her dream. Katherine Mansfield used internal monologue to reveal the character's nature and spiritual world, exposing female psychology. Mansfield's works are based on feminist ideas and are dedicated to illuminating the inner lives of women.

As we mentioned earlier, many writers have contributed to feminism in literature. However, it's not possible to discuss all of them in one article. Therefore, we have only interpreted the works of some writers in this article.

Jane Austen, an English writer, is another famous name in world literature. Throughout her career, she tried to portray the image of a woman in her works. Some of her notable novels include "Sense and Sensibility" (1811), "Pride and Prejudice" (1813), "Mansfield Park" (1814), "Emma" (1815), and several others. One of her most famous works, "Pride and Prejudice," was her first published work. The novel, published later than her other works, evokes imagination about the social stratification and the way of life of noble families during the time it is set. It also centres on love and pride. The main characters, Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth, are the focus of the story. At first, Elizabeth thinks Mr Darcy is too ambitious and self-centred and dislikes him. She is convinced of this when they meet at a ball and Darcy refuses to dance with anyone other than the Bingley sisters. She also overhears Darcy's conversations with Mr Bingley, which creates a bad impression of Darcy in her mind. However, Elizabeth's opinion of Darcy gradually changes in a positive direction throughout the novel. By the end, they confess their love for each other, and Mr. Darcy asks for Elizabeth's hand in marriage, which she agrees to, and the story ends happily. Jane Austen published this novel in 1813, and it caused a great stir in world literature.

The novel received positive feedback from critics, who praised J. Austin's ability to skillfully depict human emotions and experiences. The book delves deeply into themes such as pride, concern, love, willpower, patience, and determination, all of which are portrayed through the lens of women. As a result, the novel is often cited as a work that explores feminist ideas, as it explores the nature of women, their role in society, and their determination.

It's widely known that several movies have been made based on the novels "Jane Eyre" and "Pride and Prejudice". These movies have been beloved by many viewers for years, due to their timely themes and expertly crafted imagery.

It seems that the feminist movement in literature began developing several centuries ago, and continues to this day. There are still many works of literature written in this vein, encouraging readers to find the will to maintain women's place and status in society, and to fight resolutely for their rights.

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