

WOMEN-WRITERS IN ENGLISH LITERATURE.

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ABSTRACT

This article provides an overview of the contribution of women writers to English literature throughout history. Beginning with early pioneers such as Jane Austen and the Brontë sisters, the discussion traces the evolution of women's voices in literature, exploring the societal challenges they faced and the themes they addressed. The article examines key works by women writers across different genres, highlighting their impact on literary movements and their role in shaping cultural narratives. Furthermore, it analyzes the changing attitudes towards women's writing and the emergence of feminist literary criticism. By exploring the diverse perspectives and narratives of women writers, this article aims to underscore their significance in enriching the literary landscape and challenging conventional literary norms.

KEYWORDS: women writers, Jane Austen, Anne and Emily Bronte, criticism.

INTRODUCTION

Women's contributions to English literature have long been significant, yet often overlooked or marginalized in traditional literary canons. Despite facing numerous barriers throughout history, women writers have persevered, producing remarkable works that have left a lasting impact on the literary world. From the pioneering efforts of writers like Jane Austen and the Brontë sisters to the modern voices of contemporary authors, women have consistently pushed the boundaries of literary expression and challenged societal norms.

This introduction sets the stage for an exploration of the rich and diverse tapestry of women's writing in English literature. It will delve into the historical context surrounding women's literary endeavors, examine the societal constraints they faced, and highlight the key themes and contributions of women writers across different periods and genres.

FINDINGS

Female authors were quite uncommon in Britain when they first debuted in the early 18th century, when the novel became a central literary form. Its ideology was one of sensibility and kindness. Women played an active role in the creation of fiction, which is not surprising given that they are the primary readers of it! Their sources of inspiration included city and village life, travel experiences, love and marriage,

religion, and education. The novel concept originated in Europe, and the term novel is derived from the Italian "novella," which means new.

Aphra Behn (1640-89), born in Canterbury and died in London, was a key founder. This lady from the Restoration era was one of the first English women to earn a living as an author, shattering cultural barriers and becoming a significant literary figure for generations of other female authors. She married a Dutch merchant in London, who died the same year, spied in Antwerp for King Charles II, and visited Surinam, where she purportedly met an African slave chief. He inspired her to write *Oroonoko* in 1688, an anti-slavery critique tinged with feminism and postcolonialism.

Emily Brontë, a notable female writer from the Victorian era, is most known for her lone novel, *Wuthering Heights* (which is also on our list of classic novels to read for students!). Brontë, publishing under the pen name Ellis Bell, was also a prolific poet, with her works at the time and still today recognized as 'genius.' Her most well-known work, *Poems by Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell*, was a collection of poems published under the pseudonyms of her sisters Charlotte and Anne. Emily Brontë's noteworthy works include *Poems by Currer Ellis and Acton Bell* (1846), a compilation of poetry published jointly by the three Brontë sisters, Charlotte, Emily, and Anne. It was the first piece of work they had ever printed. *Wuthering Heights* (1847): A major work of Romantic and Gothic fiction, it centers on the stormy relationships between the Earnshaw and Lintons, two landed aristocratic families who live on the West Yorkshire moors. Heathcliff, the Earnshaws' adopted son, is a major plot point in the novel.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the journey of women writers in English literature is one marked by resilience, creativity, and perseverance in the face of adversity. From the early struggles for recognition and acceptance to the present day, women writers have continued to make invaluable contributions to the literary world, enriching our cultural heritage with their diverse voices and perspectives.

Throughout this article, we have explored the lives and works of women writers across different eras, genres, and societal contexts. We have seen how they navigated the constraints of their time, challenging traditional gender roles and societal expectations through their writing. From the insightful social commentary of Jane Austen to the bold experimentation of Virginia Woolf, women writers have left an indelible mark on literature, reshaping literary conventions and expanding the boundaries of artistic expression.

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