CHAPTER 1
The Dynamics of the Feminist Movement

(i) What is Feminism?

Proposing the "riddle of the nature of femininity" as an unresolved question that" people have knocked their heads against" throughout human history. Sigmund Freud. in his article "Femininity", argues that "men" have not "escaped worrying our this problem" but "to those of you who are women this will not apply--you yourselves are the problem."¹ But Freud was well aware of the fact that women had been "worrying" over the problem of "femininity" at least as long as men. Although "femininity" may be defined as a group of attributes referred to biologically sexed females. what exactly those attributes are and the extent to which any given account of femininity is natural or cultural. have been discussed extensively by women themselves. When Charlotte Bronte's heroine. Jane Eyre. speaks passionately to the reader of the gendered division of emotions: "Women are supposed to be very calm generally: but women feel just as men feel".² she is questioning and revolting against the commonsense understanding of femininity of her time, and as a result, its scientific as well its social basis. Both in life and fiction. "one can both live a gendered identity in all its complexity. and hold its received definition at arm's length."³

Freud wanted his readers to think over the practice of associating passivity with women. and activity with men. He considered it "inadequate.... to make masculine behaviour coincide with activity and feminine with passivity .... Women can display great activity in various directions. men are not able to live in company with their own kind unless they develop a large amount of adaptibility".⁴ He debates that "Even if" one
were to say that psychologically femininity gave preference to "passive aims". "a passive aim may call for a large amount of activity". He cautions his readers not to give activity and passivity crude gender alignments as it serves" no useful purpose and adds nothing to our knowledge".

The basic idea that Freud tries to convey is that the conventional binaries that designate gender are convenient but mistaken social fictions, and that all human beings are potentially bisexual – that their choice of sexual object is the outcome of an impeded and complex psychic trajectory.

Feminism as an organized movement, to undermine the oppression of women by men, started in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Critic Karen Offen points out that 'feminism' as a term began to be used extensively in Europe as a synonym for women's emancipation only in 1880s. It was, the woman's suffrage advocate. Hubert Auclert, who first described herself as a 'feminist' in her periodical La Citoyenne in 1882, and a 'feminist Congress' was organized in Paris in May 1882 by Eugenie Potonie-Pierre and the woman's group solidarite.

The Oxford English Dictionary used the word 'feminist' first in the Supplement to the dictionary in 1993, reprinted and revised in 1972, with two meanings: as an adjective it denotes 'pertaining to feminism or to women'; as a noun, a feminist is 'an advocate of feminism'. In the early editions of the dictionary feminism appeared, marked 'rare'. as meaning alternatively 'the state of being feminine' or 'a feminine or woman's expression'. neither of which seems to be what it means today. The Supplement deletes 'rare', gives a derivation for the word from the French féminisme, and adds two more possibilities: feminism is the 'advocacy of the rights of woman (based on the theory of the equality of the sexes)': it is also a pathological description of 'the development of female secondary
characteristics in a male'. The word 'feminine' has also been give six distinct meanings in the original dictionary and two in the Supplement. It first means: 'Of persons and animals, belonging to the female sex, female. Now race; second: 'In the same sense, of objects to which sex is attributed, or which have feminine names especially one of the heavenly bodies. Third: feminine means 'of or pertaining to a woman, or to women: consisting of women: carried on by women'. Fourth: 'characteristic of, peculiar or proper to women; womanlike, womanly'. Fifth: a descriptive usage or insult, 'Womanish, effeminate'. Lastly, the grammar usages of the word, as in the feminine genders of nouns which describe objects or concepts that are not inherently female. The Supplement adds to the grammar usages of the phrase 'feminine ending', meaning weak rhyme: and 'Eternal Feminine' as a translation of Goethe's concept of das ewig-Weibliche, interestingly it means that the Eternal Feminine has not been around all that long.

This entire process of listing of meanings clearly show that the word feminism does not have a single fixed meaning. The earliest meanings of feminism view it as 'the state of being feminine' and 'a feminine or woman's word or expression'. What for later generations has become a word caught up in the issues of political advocacy and agency, referred first of all to biology and to language, words which might be rewritten as 'nature' and 'culture', or, in fact as 'bodies' and 'language'. Feminism has a lot to do with bodies and with how those bodies speak in such a way that their sex is registered in their language.

Defining the word 'feminism', historian David Boucher writes: “Feminism includes any form of opposition to any form of social, personal or economic discrimination which women suffer because of their sex”. In other words feminism includes all forms of collective action against such discrimination, from political organization to cultural separatism.
The Feminist Movement: A Brief Sketch

The story of women’s struggle for liberation and equality is not new, it is interwoven with the history of human civilization itself. But it had never acquired that force and momentum with which it emerged in the nineteenth century as a unified force to dispel all discriminations and prejudices against women on the basis of sex. Women now came to realize that their disqualification and subordination in all the fields of life was simply because of their being women. Their growing resentment over the patriarchal attitudes and the rigid social structure forced them to stand against all discriminations firmly, which ultimately resulted as the “Feminist Movement”. The Movement shook the very foundations of all existing social systems. Like a fierce storm destroying everything that comes in its way, the Feminist Movement swept away all the dead leaves to let the new ones come to life.

There have been two great waves of feminism. The first began in the USA in the 1830s, spread rapidly to Europe and ended in the 1920s with women achieving the right to vote. The second wave also surfaced first in the USA during the early 1960s which gripped the entire Western World and made it realize its impetuosity. In many other countries too, women launched campaigns for equality according to their particular social and cultural settings.

The Feminist Movement was not a sudden phenomenon. It took a long time to come in its present form and the journey was not an easy one but rather beset with incessant struggles. Encouraged by the historical changes in the philosophical perspectives emphasizing on individual freedom, the “rights of man”, and universal education, women participated enthusiastically in the abolition movement, which gave the Feminist
Movement a real political shape. They viewed the condition of the slaves as a religious abomination and a national disgrace. They exposed the whole patriarchal social system and demanded the amendment in the US Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, for the freedom and equality of all. But nothing as such was going to change for women. They began to realize that their own situation was not different from that of the slaves. Harriet Martineau summed up the whole case in rather apt words: “One of the fundamental principles announced in the Declaration of Independence is, that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed. How can the political condition of women be reconciled with this?”.

The early initiatives towards a more specific organisation of women as feminists came from these activists in the civil rights movement, and later also from women involved in protest actions against the war in Vietnam. Thus, the “new” feminists were politically committed activists who were not afraid to take a stand and fight for their views. However, the American movement was formally launched at a convention at Seneca Falls in July, 1848, organised by Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. The convention issued a Declaration of Sentiments and twelve resolutions calling for reforms such as property rights for married women and greater access to education, trades and professions, including the Church. It emphasized on the fact that: “... the history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpation on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her.”.

Included in the list of twelve resolutions was one which read: “Resolved. That it is the duty of the women of this country to secure to themselves their sacred right to the elective franchise.” Although it is
considered the official beginning of the woman's suffrage movement, the movement was never confined only to the demand of suffrage.

Voting rights were seen as radical in the period but, as the century wore on and other rights were conceded, the suffrage gradually became the main and only issue for the movement. But the entire situation took a dramatic turn when free male slaves got the right to vote by 1866. and the women who had campaigned so long and so hard against slavery, were denied it. But resentment over the race issue divided the movement. In May, 1869, Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton organised the National Woman Suffrage Association. Later on, Lucy Stone and others organised the American Woman Suffrage Association. But it was to take another thirty years of hard struggle, hundreds of individual state campaigns, defeats, divisions and uncertainty before the vote was finally won. The 19th Amendment or Anthony Amendment was first presented to the Congress in 1878. was rejected, and continued to be rejected in every session, up to 1920, when women finally became full political citizens. Thus, the first grueling phase of the American feminist movement was over. But it was not all the movement had aimed for, in fact this was only one element in the wide ranging feminist critique questioning the fundamental organization of society. The women’s movement virtually ended in 1920, and with the exception of few organizations feminism was to lie dormant for forty years.

In the 1960s, for the first time since the women's vote was won, feminism surged again with new energy and aspirations as an important political force in the Western world. By now people also began to have a more democratic view of the feminist demands. Speaking about the new dimensions of the movement Maran Lockwood Carden says...
concerns the individual’s right to find out the kind of person he or she is and to strive to become that person.”

It was Betty Friedan, who, with the publication of her famous book *The Feminine Mystique* in 1963, provided the much needed philosophical and ideological direction to the movement. She undauntingly declared that all women had been victimized by a set of ideas – a “feminine mystique” - which permeated society and defined female happiness as a total involvement in the roles of wife and mother. She writes “We can no longer ignore that voice within women that says: ‘I want something more than my husband and my children and my house’.” That “more” she defined as a career. She declared that a woman’s horizons were circumscribed from childhood onwards by the assumption that her highest function in life was to care for her husband and rear her children. In effect the home had become a “comfortable concentration camp” which infantilized its female inhabitants and forced them to leave their adult frame of reference. Just as Victorian culture had repressed women’s need to express themselves sexually, modern culture denied them the opportunity to use their minds.

Adopting a more academic perspective, Ellen and Kenneth Keniston placed particular emphasis on the fact that young girls had no positive models of career women to imitate. They declared that those forms of oppression were most effective with which the victim covertly cooperated, and women provided a case in point. Denied of any culturally approved alternative to homemaking, most females internalized society’s view of their place and role, and accepted a “voluntary servitude” in the home rather than risk losing their femininity.” Carrie Chapman Catt was also of the view that the movement had an aim to “destroy the idea that obedience is necessary to women: to train women to such self-respect that they would
not grant obedience: and to train men to such comprehension of equity that they would not exact it".  

So, during the 1960s American women faced a very confusing situation as to how to strike a balance between the traditional ideas of women’s place in society and the increasing reality of female involvement in activities outside home. They still wanted to get married and have children but they also desired to experience the world beyond, to soar freely in the regions denied to them by culture and other ideological restrictions. Their own identity, personality and the intimate self were at stake. They were not ready to ignore that voice demanding “more” which inspired them to realize their own identity.

Thus, the new feminist movement places a great importance upon the gender issue and the role of women in society. The feminists feel that society has bound them in such a way that they cannot and should not do anything against what has already been framed for them. They argue that the biological differences between men and women have been too much emphasized whereas as the fact is that the different socialization processes account for the greater part of the observed differences in their behaviour.

It was increasingly felt that nothing can be achieved without having an organization for women to defend their rights as the media and the political bodies were very hostile to the idea of feminism. It materialized in the form of National Organization of Women (NOW). With 300 charter members, both male and female, NOW announced its incorporation at a press conference in Washington D.C. on October 29, 1966. Betty Friedan was elected the first president, Dr. Kathryn Clarenbach, chairperson of the board and Richard Graham, treasurer. The Statement of Purpose announced its goal:
... to take the action to bring women into full participation in the mainstream of American society now, exercising all the privileges and responsibilities thereof in truly equal partnership with men.  

NOW provided a platform for a strong political lobby for women's rights as well as a philosophical forum for new feminist ideas. In this way it functioned initially as an umbrella group for all women from altogether diverse backgrounds and diverse expectations for the organization.

(iii) The Question of Gender

The Feminist Movement of the 1960's was seriously concerned with family and personal life. With the emergence of radical feminism and the slogan "The personal is political", the family and personal life caught the attention of a political movement which characterized its concerns as political. This started a process of rethinking of the lines traditionally separating the family from other social institutions and a questioning of the family as a biological institution. This new focus started recognizing the family as a social institution, as a product of history, and as capable of change.

These concerns emphasized the need for theory to analyse family, its origin, history and interrelation with other social institutions. This need manifested itself in anthropology and psychoanalytic theory. The findings of these disciplines suggested that the traits and practices associated with men and women varied widely from culture to culture: gender roles were not fixed; and sexuality could not be explained in merely biological terms. Psychoanalyst and anthropologist Robert J. Stoller, in his book *Sex and Gender: On the Development of Masculinity and Femininity* (1968), made a clear distinction between sex and gender. Stoller used the term 'gender' to
refer to the complexities of those "tremendous areas of behaviour, feelings, thoughts, and fantasies that are related to the sexes and yet do not have primarily biological connotations". Stoller's work greatly influenced Kate Millett when she made the statement in Sexual Politics that "male and female are really two cultures" as she doubted "the validity and permanence of psycho-sexual identity" as a fact of life.

Perhaps, it was Gayle Rubin who, in her influential essay "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex", tried to define the relationship between sex and gender through the contrast between nature and culture. Rubin argued that every known society has what she calls "a sex/gender system" that is

a set of arrangements by which the biological raw material of human sex and procreation is shaped by human, social intervention and satisfied in a conventional manner. No matter how bizarre some of the conventions may be.

In her essay Rubin shows how men enjoy having certain rights in their female kin, while women do not have the same rights either to themselves or their male kin and in fact they may be used as bride wealth, trophies, gifts and may be traded, bought, and sold. Rubin writes that "sex is sex but what counts as sex is culturally determined and obtained." One of the main insights of Foucault's History of Sexuality is that there is no simple sense in which 'sex is sex', and that our ideas and beliefs concerning sexuality have been changed over the last hundred years. In fact, they are still changing. Thus, sex and gender are closely interconnected, but not because one is 'natural' while the other represents its transformation into 'culture'. Rather both are unavoidably cultural categories that refer to ways
of describing and understanding human bodies and human relationships. our relationship to ourselves and to others.

In *Gender Trouble*. Judith Butler argues that gender is a symbolic form of 'public action' whose repetition allows for our recognition as describing and desirable subjects. Butler writes:

Gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a stylized repetition of acts. The effect of gender is produced through the stylization of the body and, hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and styles of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self.25

Butler's theory of signification sounds as if gender is a matter of choice, of picking up and discarding identities at will. In fact, Butler has herself cautioned against this kind of misguided reading of *Gender Trouble*. Gender identity is not something we can freely choose, but one that we also struggle against, that sustains us at the same time as it constrains us.

Teresa de Lauretis in her book *Technologies of Gender: Essays on Theory, Film, and Fiction* (1987) pointed that today's representations of gender are constructed by a number of "technologies of gender" such as cinema or advertising and that we, as gendered subjects, can be viewed to be "constructed across a multiplicity of discourses, positions, and meanings, which are often in conflict with one another."

De Lauretis thinks that these discursive contradictions provide an opportunity to form new gender identities. But Chantal Mouffe argues that "despite their heterogeneity, discourses and practices do not take place in isolation" but communicate with each other to form" a common effect." As a result "the feminine" is permanently set up "as a subordinated pole to the masculine", a process in
which "the symbolism linked in a given society to the feminine condition plays a fundamental role". There can be no mitigation of gendered inequalities unless this symbolism is successfully confronted.

(iv) Feminist Criticism

The Feminist Movement was strongly literary from the beginning as it emphasized on the importance of fighting the false depiction of women in literature. Feminism, therefore, has always been crucially concerned with books and literature, and so, feminist criticism should not be seen as an offshoot of feminism which is remote from the ultimate aims of the movement, but as "one of its most practical ways of influencing everyday conduct and attitudes".

Giving it a sort of definition J.A. Cuddon writes in his dictionary:

It questions the long standing, dominant, male, phallocentric ideologies (which add up to a kind of male conspiracy). patriarchal attitudes and male interpretations in literature (and critical evaluation of literature). It attacks male notions of value in literature by offering critiques of male authors and representations of men in literature and also by privileging women writers. In addition it challenges traditional and accepted male ideas about the nature of women and about how women feel, act and think or are supposed to feel act and think and how in general they respond to life and living. It thus questions numerous prejudices and assumptions about women made by male writers, not least any tendency to cast women in stock character roles.
Thus, feminist criticism is concerned both with the representation of women in literature and with changing women’s position in society by liberating them from oppressive restraints. Central to these restrictions are essentialist definitions of woman which assume that human nature is universal and culture has no role in constructing and fixing identity.

Since 1969 there has been an explosion of feminist writings without close parallel in the history of previous critical innovations, in a movement that, as Elaine Showalter has remarked, display the urgency and excitement of a religious awakening.  

Feminist criticism, as it is practised now, is not a unitary theory, but includes a great variety of practices i.e., from psychoanalytic, Marxist and post-structuralist theories, and is constantly developing and changing, so instead of speaking of feminist criticism in the singular it makes more sense to speak of feminist criticisms in the plural. Nevertheless, almost all feminist criticisms share some common assumptions and concepts that constitute a common ground for the diverse ways that individual critics explore, the factor of sexual difference and privilege in the production, the form and content, the reception, and the critical analysis and evaluation of works or literature.  

1) They all agree that the entire social structure of world civilization is patriarchal, that the world is organised on terms dictated by men, and to the advantage of men. The woman is defined as negative or the “other” to the man who is the defining and dominating “subject”. Male is regarded as the norm, as the central and neutral position from which the female is a departure. Simone de Beauvoir puts it in this way: “Thus humanity is male...
and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him: she is not regarded as an autonomous being."

She is subordinate to man as she lacks the identifying male organ, the symbol of male power, the centre of the entire culture and civilization. Women are forcefully trained to internalize this all pervading patriarchal ideology of male superiority, and so are conditioned to denigrate their own sex and contribute in their own subordination.

2) They believe that gender differences are socially constructed though they are presented as natural or normal. There is an important distinction between sex and gender. Sex is used to indicate the biological differences between man and woman, but gender signifies the socially constructed differences which operate in most societies and which lead to forms of inequality, oppression and exploitation between the sexes. Both femininity and masculinity are socially constructed and invested with various qualities, values, images and narratives which constantly circulate in society and which shape and determine people's attitudes and lives. In this way the masculine in our culture has come to be identified as active, dominating, adventurous, rational and creative, while the feminine represents the passive, the acquiescent, timid, emotional and conventional.

3) The feminist critics consider literature as both “agents of reinforcement and of subversion in the ways that they construct or represent gender relations”. The patriarchal or androcentric ideology pervades the canonical writings written almost entirely by men for men. All the great literary works focus on male protagonists – Oedipus, Ulysses, Hamlet, Tom Jones, Captain Ahab, Huckleberry Finn - who represent masculine qualities, ways of thinking and feeling. Female characters, in comparison to the male characters, are marginal and subordinate, and are represented either as
complimentary to or in opposition to masculine desires and enterprises".\(^{35}\) These works, as they lack autonomous female characters, unconsciously force the female reader to identify herself with the male protagonists and in the process adopt male values and ways of perceiving, feeling and acting. Thus, they convert women into men who think and act like men and reinforce their own subjugation.

(4) They also believe that not only literary works but the traditional ways of analyzing and criticizing these works, the entire aesthetics, which represent themselves as objective, disinterested, and universal, are also a part of masculine ideology and interests and are thoroughly gender-biased.

Thus, a feminist critic’s task is manifold, focusing on the reconstruction of all the ways they deal with literature so as to do justice to female points of views, concerns, and values. They may be broadly listed as follows:

1. Enlarge and re-order or if necessary displace the canon, aiming at the rediscovery of a hidden tradition of women’s writing.
2. Re-evaluate women’s experience.
3. Examine the “image of women” in literature both by men and women.
4. Challenge representation of women as “Other”, as “lack”, as part of “nature”.
5. Examine power relations.
6. Re-organize the role of language in presenting a social construct as natural.
7. Examine the role of gender politics in constructing men and women.
8. Explore the possibilities of an *écriture féminine*.

9. Re-read psychoanalysis to explore the male and female identities.

10. Question Roland Barthes' notion of the death of the author and examine its implications.

11. Expose the ideological politics of "neutral" or "mainstream" literary interpretations.

12. Convert the acquiescent, passive reader into "the Resisting Reader" as Judith Fetterley puts it, who does "the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction" as Adrienne Rich desires her to do.

(v) **The Tradition of Feminist Writing**

When Simone de Beauvoir wrote in her path-breaking book *The Second Sex* (1949), "one is not born, but rather becomes a woman .... It is civilization as a whole that produces this creature ... which is described as feminine". She questioned the very authenticity of the culture and its weapon, literature, which had created a false image of women and with the power of patriarchal system converted this false image into a reality. She opened the door for new critical thinking which had a long traditional force with it. It includes Mary Wollstonecraft’s *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), which discusses male writers like Milton, Pope, and Rousseau; Olive Schreiner’s *Women and Labour* (1911); Virginia Woolf’s *A Room of One’s Own* (1929), which vividly portrays the unequal treatment given to women seeking education and alternatives to marriage and motherhood. John Stuart Mill’s *The Subjection of Woman* (1869) and Friedrich Engel’s *The Origin of the Family* (1884) also contributed to this tradition of feminist writing.
Contemporary feminist literature has portrayed the conditions, the pains and the problems of women in a very sensitive and sympathetic way. Presenting their plight, Ann Rosenberg writes:

They all want to come and drink from our wells.
Drown in my pussy in liquid passion.
Scan my topography.
Search all the crevices.
And ultimately bury their bones, the dogs.39

(a) Anglo-American Feminist Writing

Feminist critics during the 1970s were preoccupied with the idea that women writers had been silenced, by and large excluded from literary history. They desired to rediscover the lost work of women writers in order to provide a context that would be helpful for contemporary women writers. They also wanted to express 'what it is to be female', to declare the experience and perceptions that had never been heard. Well aware of the fact that critical attention focused mostly on male writers, these critics demanded a status and recognition for women authors. But they did not aim to put women into the male-dominated tradition: instead, they wanted to write the history of a tradition among women themselves.

The kind of feminist criticism which began in the late 1960s and 70s, was political and polemical in nature given the political orientation of women in society. Indeed, a substantial amount of feminist criticism goes beyond literature to explore the socio-economic status of women: their economic position (as women) and the problems they face in a prejudiced world of male publishers and critics. Mary Ellmann’s Thinking About Women (1968) inaugurated this new feminist literary movement in America. She expressed her view that Western culture at all levels is
conditioned by the tendency to comprehend all phenomena in terms of "original and simple sexual differences." She criticizes male literature for projecting femininity in eleven major stereotypes: formlessness, passivity, instability, confinement, piety, materiality, spirituality, irrationality, compliancy and finally "the two incorrigible figures" of the Witch and the Shrew. She points out that male critics even when objective, automatically choose adjectives and phrases that tend to make the woman's poetry charming and sweet (as woman should be) as opposed to serious and significant (as men are supposed to be). But as Thinking About Women was less political and more academic, it could not gain that popularity with which Kate Millett's Sexual Politics (1969) stunned the world and set it on fire. She examines how patriarchy, "the birthright priority whereby male rules females," plays politics in human relationships by stereotyped lines of sex category. She defines the "essence of politics" as power and explains all cultural phenomena purely in terms of power politics:

One must acknowledge that the chivalrous stance is a game the master group plays in elevating its subject to pedestal level .... As the sociologist Hugo Beigal has observed, both the courtly and romantic versions of love are 'grants' which the male concedes out of his total power. Both have had the effect of obscuring the patriarchal character of Western culture and in their general tendency to attribute impossible virtues to women, have ended by confining them in a narrow and often remarkably conscribing sphere of behaviour.

She addressed herself to such writers as Norman Mailer, Henry Miller, D.H. Lawrence and Jean Genet who provide "instances of sexual description". The most striking aspect of Millett's criticism is the boldness with which she reads "against the grain" of the literary text. She openly
presents her perspective and shows how precisely such conflict between the reader and the author/text can reveal the hidden implication of a work and thus rejects the traditional hierarchy of text and reader. As a reader, Kate Millett is not submissive or lady like: “her style is that of a hard-nosed street kid out to challenge the author’s authority at every turn” as Toril Moi puts it, which is perfectly suitable to feminism’s political purposes.

Finding a female tradition. Tillie Olsen conceives of a “women’s movement” that generates curiosity about women writers. In her Silences, she writes that, "It is the women's movement, part of the other movements of our time for a fully human life, that has brought this forum into being; kindling a renewed, in most instances a first-time, interest in the writings and writers of our sex.” Patricia Spacks in The Female Imagination (1975) described the literature of female experience and its excited consumption by newly conscious women students. Like Sexual Politics it assumed that novels referred directly to the world or to the self of the writer but it fell short of specific historicizing of that world or the self.

Taking Olsen’s idea further, Ellen Moers in Literary Women (1976) talks about “a literary movement apart from, but hardly subordinate to, the mainstream: an undercurrent, rapid and powerful” beginning in the late 18th century with Jane Austen. Literary Women was the outcome of a long process of reflection on women that began in 1963 when Betty Friedan's The Feminine Mystique was published, a book that forced Moeres to change her views on the need to treat women writers as a separate group. The reasons of this change were, first, the satisfying results of such a separation, then the fact that “we already practice a segregation of major women writers unknowingly” and finally, a deeper understanding of the true nature of women's history. Thus Moeres reflects the development of many academic women: from suspecting all attempts at separating women from the main
stream of historical development as a form of anti-egalitarianism, they started accepting the political necessity of seeing women as a distinctive group if the common patriarchal practices of subsuming women under the general category of 'man', and therefore silencing them, was to be effectively defeated. *Literary Women* was the first attempt at describing the history of women's writing. It linked female characters and authors as heroines in the realm of female history, placing a female tradition of influence along with men's and finding female modes and myths in literature.

Elaine Showalter, in *A Literature of Their Own* (1977), dismisses this idea of a women's movement which suggests a steady and continuous development in women's writing. She agrees with Moers' view that “women studied with a special closeness the works written by their own sex”. But the “holes and hiatuses” the absences, gaps and descriptions have broken this history, and instead stresses, with Germaine Greer, on the “phenomenon of the transience of female literary fame” or the fact that only a small group of women celebrated “dazzling” literary prestige in their own lifetimes but vanished without trace from the records of posterity. Showalter concludes:

Thus each generation of women writers have found itself in a sense, without a history, forced to rediscover the past anew, forging again and again the consciousness of their sex. Given this perpetual disruption, and also the self-hatred that has alienated women writers from a sense of collective identity, it does not seem possible to speak of a 'movement'.

So finally it is the responsibility of all women individually and collectively to reconstruct the fractured tradition. Showalter also disagrees
with Patricia Meyer Spack's concept of a "female imagination" as it runs dangerously close to reiterating the common stereotypes and can confirm the belief in "a deep, basic, and inevitable difference between male and female ways of perceiving the world". Instead, she believes that "the female literary tradition comes from the still evolving relationship between women writers and their society".

Showing how the female literary tradition from the generation of the Brontës to the present day formed a "literary subculture", Showalter argued that "women themselves have constituted a subculture within the framework of a larger society and have been unified by values, conventions, experiences, and behaviours impinging on each individual". She categorizes three major phases of historical development of all literary subcultures, such as Black Jewish, Canadian, Anglo-Indian, or even American.

First is the phase of imitation, in which women writers imitated dominant male tradition, and of internalization, the standards of art and society. The second phase is of protest against these standards and values, and of advocacy of minority rights and values including autonomy. Third is the phase of self-discovery, a search for identity, emphasizing on female writing and female experience. She also calls these stages Feminine, Feminist and Female. Toril Moi explains that the first is "a set of culturally defined characteristics", the second "a political position", the third "a matter of biology". The Feminine phase starts with the appearance of the male pseudonym in the 1840s and lasts until the death of George Eliot in 1880; the Feminist phase is from 1880 to 1920 and the Female phase is from 1920 onwards, which entered a new stage of self-awareness about 1960.

Explaining further these developments in literary criticism from "androtexts" to "gynotexts", Showalter distinguishes between "feminist
"Feminist critique", concerned with woman as reader, deals with works by male authors and is a "historically grounded inquiry which probes the ideological assumptions of literary phenomena."55. "Gynocritics", which deals with woman as writer, is concerned with "the history, styles, themes, genres, and structures of writing by women; the psychodynamics of female creativity; the trajectory of the individual or collective female career; and the evolution or the laws of a female literary tradition".56 She recommends "gynocritics" as it provides directly "what women have felt and experienced".57 Here the text becomes the transparent medium through which "experience" can be gleaned. This view of texts reflects the traditional emphasis of Western patriarchal humanism.

Showalter's major contribution to literary history in general, and to feminist criticism in particular is her emphasis on the rediscovery of the women writers who were either forgotten or neglected. It is because of Showalter's efforts that many such women writers are getting recognition they actually deserve. Speaking in high terms Toril Moi says, "A Literature of Their Own is a veritable goldmine of information about the lesser-known literary women of the period. This epochal book displays wide-ranging scholarship and an admirable enthusiasm and respect for its subjects".58

In the mid-1970s, along with the ongoing emphasis on equal rights and opportunities, there was a new celebration of the distinctive experience of women. For this celebration, a new emphasis on mythology was laid on, as history with dull record of oppression and repression was supposed to be insufficient. In such an atmosphere the poet and critique Adrienne Rich wrote Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution (1976), glorifying motherhood, creativity, female bonding, and the lesbian experience and gave her dream of a common language uncovering the female self. In On Lies, Secrets, and Silence (1979), her selected essays
written between 1966 and 1978, Rich defined a female consciousness which was "political, aesthetic, and erotic, and which refuses to be included or contained in the culture of passivity." She emphasized the need of revision, the new way of reading and looking, to discover a new psychic space, a new history, and a new language, bringing together ethics, living and thinking.

Nancy Chodorow's *The Reproduction of Mothering* (1978) and 'Gender. Relation. and Difference in Psychoanalytic Perspective' (1980) further celebrated motherhood by revising the traditional Freudian psychology that focused on the male Oedipal drama and penis envy of the girl. Chodorow, in contrast to Freud, linked the child's sense of identity with the mother. Instead of Freud's concept of the unconscious, she preferred the idea of gender imprinting and role-playing. The idea received considerable acceptance as it linked the unmodifiable psychological with the more accessible sociological.

Mary Daly, an immensely popular writer among women students on American campuses in the 1970s, in *Beyond God the Father* (1973), blamed men of having stolen language from women, a theft enacted in *Genesis*. She urged women to transform and take back their language. In *Gyn/Ecology* she aimed to go beyond the male myths encoded within the language and beyond a male-centered logic of binary oppositions based on the gender division to develop a new female syntax which would naturally express the female body.

Dale Spender, in *Man Made Language* (1980), asked some probing questions about the power of language. Instead of simply celebrating women's writings. she expressed a concern about separate languages for men and women:
The English language has been literally man made and ... it is still primarily under male control .... This monopoly over language is one of the means by which males have ensured the invisibility or "other" nature of females. and this primacy is perpetuated while women continue to use, unchanged, the language which we have inherited.60

In 1979 Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar published The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Imagination. In this famous and monumental study, Gilbert and Gubar try to solve the dilemma of all women who find themselves handicapped in the patriarchal system as Anais Nin puts it, "... this 'I am God', which makes creation an act of solitude and pride, this image of God alone making sky, earth, sea, it is this image which has confused woman"61 Gilbert and Gubar point out that the Author, in "the male metaphors of literary creation that depend upon such an etiology"62 becomes the Divine Creator, the Father, the sole origin and meaning of his work. They ask a very important question: "What if such a proudly masculine cosmic Author is the sole legitimate model for all earthly authors? Or worse, what if the male generative power is not just the only legitimate power but the only power there is?"63 Thus the entire creative field is inherently masculine and there is no place for women, the "Cyphers", as Anne Finch calls them:

... we beside NOU but as Cyphers stand
To increase your Numbers and to swell the account
Of your delights which from our charms amount
And sadly are by this distinction taught.
That since the Fall (by our seducement wrought)
Our is the greater loss as ours the greater fault.64
Since creativity is masculine, the very images of femininity are also male constructions. Therefore, for the female artist, the necessary process of self-identification is complicated by all these patriarchal images and "definitions that intervene between herself and herself". That inevitably leads them to suffer from the "anxiety of authorship". If the author is defined as male and she herself as his creature, how can she venture to take up the pen, symbolising the phallus? Answering this question they put forward the main thesis of the book:

Women from Jane Austen and Mary Shelley to Emily Bronte and Emily Dickinson produced literary works that are in some sense palimpsestic, works whose surface designs conceal or obscure deeper, less accessible (and less socially acceptable) levels of meaning. Thus these authors managed the difficult task of achieving true female literary authority by simultaneously conforming to and subverting patriarchal literary standards.

These female writers are "duplicitous" whose consciousness is opaque to man and whose mind will not but itself be penetrated by the "phallic probings" of the masculine thought. They expressed their own female anger in a series of duplicitous textual strategies, assaulting and revising, deconstructing and reconstructing the images of women constructed by male literature of both the angel and the monster, the sweet heroine and the raging "mad woman". A famous example of the mad woman is Bertha Rochester in Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre (1847). Such a figure is, as Gilbert and Gubar put it, "usually in some sense the author's double, an image of her own anxiety and rage". But their insistence on the identity of author and character, author as the upholder of all meaning, draws them to the Western patriarchal philosophy of The Author – the
Father - The God, where a woman does not have any place. So if we really want to reject the model of the author as God the Father of the text, we will have to reject the critical practice that projects the author as the “transcendental signified”, the real source, origin and meaning of the text. If we want to undo this patriarchal practice of authority we will have to accept Roland Barthes’ theory of “the death of the author”. Once the author is dead, the practice to decipher a text becomes quite futile; the multiplicity of writing where “everything is to be disentangled, nothing deciphered” becomes the right approach to see the writing:

The space of writing is to be ranged over, not pierced: writing ceaselessly posits meaning ceaselessly to evaporate it, carrying out a systematic exemption of meaning. In precisely this way literature (it would be better now on to say writing), by refusing to assign a ‘secret’, an ultimate meaning, to the text (and to the world as text), liberates what may be called an anti-theological activity, an activity that is truly revolutionary since to refuse to fix meaning is, in the end, to refuse God and his hypostates – reason, science, law."

In the 1980s, feminist criticism involved more multi-voiced critiques of literature which the formulation of a single women's tradition could not address. Cora Kaplan's article 'Pandora's box: subjectivity, class and sexuality in socialist feminist criticism' dealt with a more problematic notion of feminist criticism which neither used women's repression and exclusion from literary institution as its key, nor did it rely on the authority of women's psycho-sexual experience. It paired two different models of feminist criticism in relation to Charlotte Bronte's Villete. She discussed how the psycho-analytic model of Mary Jacobus's decodes the literary psyches as emblems of repressed Victorian femininity, while the socio-
feminist model of Judith Newton makes the psyche simply a repository of social values. Kaplan believes that these two approaches can be integrated to form a third reading where women's literary sexuality as a displaced representation of experience can stand for instabilities both of class and gender.

Many Jacobus's Reading Women attacks directly on feminist literary history in the persons of "herstoryians". These included critics take Showalter, Gilbert and Gubar. Jacobus calls them "essentialists". Especially disapproving Showalter's concentration on female writing, she disputes the idea that women writers should be privileged in criticism since the category of women writer is inevitably problematic itself and since an intervention of psychoanalysis is required to show how 'difference' is produced. She believes that it is only through psychoanalysis that women's writing can be liberated from the determinism of origin or essence, which is reiterated not probed in the herstory approach.

In 'Gynesis' (1982) and Gynesis (1985), article and book, Alice Jardine follows Jacobus in taking issue with American feminist criticism. She accuses American historical criticism of having a naive empirical view of reality, of failing to understand that "'Truth' and 'reality' are ... radically and irrevocably problematized". It also fails to grasp that it is not the self, a woman or a man, that speaks but "language, the unconscious, the textuality of the text": the "assurance of an author's sex within the whirlpool of de-centering is problematized beyond recognition ..." According to Jardine, the drawback in American gynocritics is its dependence on premodernist notions of subject, experience and representation. This dependence results in a lack of theory and a reactionary praxis, while old ways of thought and knowledge are left in place.
(b) French Feminist Writing

Whereas Anglo-American critics have, for the most part, been concerned with empirical and thematic studies of the writings by and about women. French feminist critics have been concerned with the theory of the role of gender in writing, taking as its starting-point the insights of major post-structuralists, especially Lacan, Foucault, and Derrida. While it includes both the existential philosophy of Simone de Beauvoir and the materialist analysis of Christine Delphy, the psychoanalytic critiques of Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray and Helene Cixous, all focus on the relationship between female subjectivity and forms of language. Despite their differences, these critics shape certain preconceptions. First, they believe that Western patriarchy is a symbolic order with a language/discourse characterized by objectivity and rationality. Change in socio-economic structure will involve linguistic change in this symbolic order which might be stimulated by new models drawn from the maternal. Second, they claim that all Western languages, in all their features, are basically male-engendered and male-dominated, and that discourse is predominantly "phallogocentric" as Jacques Derrida puts it. Third, the literary text is never primarily a representation of reality, or a reproduction of a personal voice expressing the personal experience. Fourth, they argue that in the new and varied psycho-social, linguistic constructs we might release the repressed Other, or femininity, into culture. Hence French feminists are interested in the texts which draw attention to processes of representation. They believe that processes can reveal gender-specific subjectivities and that these are the processes of meaning making which create gender misrepresentations, not only in literature, but also in the political world. They are thus concerned with the possibility of a woman's language and of ecriture feminine that will not "automatically be
appropriated into this phallogocentric language, for such appropriation forces her into complicity with the linguistic features that impose on females a condition of marginality and subservience, or even of linguistic nonentity*.  

There has always been felt a lack of a woman’s language as Virginia Woolf suggests in her book, *A Room of One’s Own*, that language use is gendered, so that when a woman turns to novel writing she finds that there is “no common sentence ready for her use”.  

The female writers are seen as suffering the handicap of having to use a medium (prose writing) which is essentially a male instrument fashioned for male purposes. Putting this in a right perspective Dale Spender in her *Man Made Language* (1980) says:

> The semantic rule which has been responsible for the manifestation of sexism in language, can be simply stated: there are two fundamental categories, *male* and *minus male*. To be linked with male is to be linked to a range of meanings which are positive and good: to be linked to minus male is to be linked to the absence of these qualities. ... The semantic structure of English language reveals a great deal about what it means to be female in patriarchal order.  

To remove this handicap Helene Cixous posited the existence of an *écriture féminine* in her essay ‘The Laugh of the Medusa’. *Écriture féminine* denotes “writing which is typically, characteristically feminine in style, language, tone and feeling, and completely different from (and opposed to) male language and discourse”.  

though it has nothing to do with biological determinism as women often write in male discourse and man can write in a feminine way. Therefore, she has preferred to call it a “writing said to be feminine” (or masculine) or, more recently, a
"decipherable libidinal femininity which can be read in writing produced by a male or a female". It facilitates the free play of meanings within the framework of loosened grammatical structures. Cixous' concept of *écriture féminine* is closely related to Derrida's concept of writing as *differance*. Once she put that feminine texts are texts that "work on the difference", strive in the direction of difference, struggle to undermine the dominant phallogocentric logic, split open the closure of the binary opposition and revel in the pleasures of open-ended textuality. This difference is not a binary opposition to the phallocentric discourse, but a celebration of creativity in difference as multiplicity and heterogeneity. As Cixous says that we cannot talk about a female sexuality, uniform, homogenous, classifiable into codes.

Cixous strongly believed in the inherently bisexual nature of all human beings, therefore she warned against the dangers of confusing the sex of the author with the 'sex' of the writing he or she produces. She thought it necessary for the existence of *écriture féminine* to abolish "the classic conception of bisexuality", "squashed under the emblem of castration fear and along with the fantasy of a 'total' being (though composed of two halves)," which "would do away with the difference experienced as to operation incurring loss, as the mark of dreaded sectility". This "self-effacing, merger-type bisexuality" is designed to cater to the male fear of the Other (woman) in so far as it allows him to fantasize away the inescapable signs of sexual difference. Against this, Cixous proposes what she calls the *other sexuality*, which is multiple, variable and even changing, consisting as it does of the "non-exclusion either of the difference or of one sex". One of the characteristics is the "multiplication of the effects of the inscription of the desire, over all parts of my body and the other body". Instead of removing the differences, it
stirs them up, follows them and increases them. She says that "woman is bisexual": man—it’s a secret to no one—being poised to keep glorious phallic mono-sexuality in view." And this is precisely the reason that she denies the possibility of ever defining a feminist practice of writing:

... for this practice can never be theorized, enclosed, coded—which does not mean that it does not exist. But it will always surpass the discourse that regulates the phallocentric system: it does and will take place in areas other than those subordinated to philosophico theoretical domination. It will be conceived of only by subjects who are breakers of automatisms, by peripheral figures that no authority can ever subjugate.^^

Later on she gives it a sort of definition which echoes Derrida’s concept of ecriture:

To admit that writing is precisely working (in) the in-between, inspecting the process of the same and the other without which nothing can live, undoing the work of death—to admit this is first to want the two, as well as both, the ensemble of one and the other, not fixed is sequence of struggle and expulsion or some other form of death but infinitely dynamised by an incessant process of exchange from one subject to another.^^

For Cixous this kind of writing is somehow uniquely the product of female physiology, which women must celebrate in their writing: "Women must write through their bodies, they must invent the impregnable language that will wreck partitions, classes, and rhetorics, regulations and codes...".^^ Ecriture feminine is based on the “feminine libidal economy” of gift and generosity against the thrift of a “masculine libidal economy” which is
centered on the phallus and discretely bounded. In fact, *écriture féminine* will subvert the proper, phallocentric reason because in putting her body forward woman wields the force of the repressed. So, woman’s voice which has been choked within patriarchal cultures resonates with a song that opens on to a volcanic laughter-trembling the old grounds of logic, overturning the heaps of reason, splitting the law to pieces and making rubble of man’s property. In a memorable image, Cixous writes that if one dares to look at Medusa (the figurehead of the suppressed and feared feminine), one will see that she is laughing, and beautiful.

Cixous finds the source of *écriture féminine* in the mother and mother-child relationship before the child acquires, “conventional” language, in a pre-Oedipal stage. The mother’s voice, like a melodious song, melts and suffuses our entire being, pulsating the music of entire creation in our bodies. It takes the speaking/writing woman in a space beyond time (eternity), a space where there is no naming and no syntax. Thus, the writing woman is immensely powerful: hers is a puissance féminine derived directly from the mother, an always and ever flowing fountain of perpetual strength: “The more you have, the more you give the more you are, the more you give the more you have”.

Inspite of certain divergences, Irigaray’s vision of femininity and feminine language is almost similar to that of Helene Cixous. Like Cixous, Luce Irigaray posits a ‘woman’s language’, which she calls “*le parler femme*”, or “womanspeak”, which is multiple, diverse, heterogeneous and “fluid” in style, breaking syntax and developing towards a new syntax of “auto-affection”. This language has a morphological basis associated with the structure and shape of the genital organs and so it evades male phallocentric monopoly. This style of writing resists and explodes all the
established forms, figures, ideas and concepts. Irigaray says that a different approach is required “to hear an ‘other meaning’ which is constantly in the process of weaving itself, at the same time ceaselessly embracing words and yet casting them off to avoid becoming fixed, immobilized”.

Discussing woman’s position as the ‘other’ in Western culture, Luce Irigaray says that the concept of sexual difference is based on the visibility of difference where the eye decides what is clearly true and what is not. Thus the basic fact of sexual difference is that the male has a visible sex organ, the phallus, and the female has not: so in difference with the male, the female has nothing.

The female difference is viewed as an absence or negation of the male norm. Taking this crucial point, Irigaray posits that in the binary structure of language, the male and the masculine is the norm, the positive and the superior, whereas the female and the feminine is believed to be an aberration, the lack, the negative and the inferior. She says that in our culture woman is outside representation: “The feminine has consequently had to be deciphered as forbidden [interdit], in between signs, between the realised meanings, between the lines”. She is the negative required by the male-subject's “specialization”, which is a basic concept in Western philosophical discourse: the necessity of postulating a subject that is capable of reflecting on its own being. She says that western culture functions like a mirror (speculum mundi) which reflects back man as the master of the universe, and the universe and God in the image of man, while it distorts the image of woman as imperfect, lacking, or a hysterical subject. Therefore in our society representation, and all social and cultural structures, are products of what she perceives as a fundamental hom(m)osexualité [homo (same) and hommo (man)]: the male desire for the
same. But woman is denied the pleasure of self-representation and she is cut off from any kind of pleasure that might be particular to her.

Caught in the specular logic of patriarchy, woman is left with just two options; either to remain silent, producing "incomprehensible babble" or to "enact" the specular representation of herself as a lesser male. The second choice, the woman as mimic, provides woman a tool to work at "destroying" the discursive mechanism of patriarchy. She advises that one must assume the feminine role deliberately. Here, the feminine is not a natural predisposition for women but a conscious utilization of a deconstructive tactic which Irigaray calls "mimicry". She warns that it is a dangerous undertaking "to try to recover the place of her exploitation by discourse, without allowing herself to be simply reduced to it". Clarifying it further she says that, "It means to resubmit herself – inasmuch as she is on the side of the 'perceptible', of 'matter' – to ideas, in particular to ideas about herself, that are elaborated in/by a masculine logic, but so as to make 'visible', by an effect of playful repetition what was supposed to remain invisible: the cover-up of a possible operation of the feminine in language." Hers is a theatrical presentation of the mime: miming the miming imposed on women, a subtle specular move that intends to "undo" the effects of phallocentric discourse simply by "overdoing" them. It shows that it is possible for women to "exceed" and "disturb" the phallocentric logic.

Julia Kristeva takes the notion of écriture féminine to further heights. Her semiotics emphasizes the marginal and the heterogenous as that which can overturn the central structures of traditional linguistics. Philip E. Lewis points out that all of Kristeva's work up to 1974 constitutes a great effort to define or understand what she calls the "signifying
In order to understand this process she replaces Lacan's distinction between the Imaginary and the Symbolic Order by the semiotic and the symbolic. The interpretation between these two terms constitutes the signifying process.

In her essay 'The System and the Speaking Subject' the symbolic is associated with authority, order, fathers, repression and control. This aspect of language carries the idea that the self is fixed and unified, which she describes as "a language with a foreclosed subject or with a transcendental subject-ego". By contrast, the semiotic is characterized not by logic and order, but by "displacement, slippage, condensation" which implies a much looser, more randomized way of making connections, one which increases the available range of possibilities. This aspect of language is associated with the pre-Oedipal primary processes, the pulsations which Kristeva sees as predominantly anal and oral; and at the same time dichotomous (life v. death, expulsion v. interjection) and heterogeneous. The continuous flow of pulsations is gathered up in the chora (from the Greek word for enclosed space. womb), which Plato in the Timaeus explains as "an invisible and formless being which receives all things and in some mysterious way partakes of the intelligible. and is most incomprehensible". But Kristeva redefines Plato's concept and concludes that the chora is neither a sign nor a position. but "a wholly provisional articulation that is essentially mobile and constituted of movements and their ephemeral states …. Neither model nor copy. it is anterior to and underlies figuration and therefore also speculiarization. and only admits analogy with vocal or kinetic rhythen".

Kristeva considers significance a matter of positioning. She believes that the semiotic process must be split if signification is to be produced.
This splitting of the semiotic _chora_ is the _thetic_ phase and it enables the subject to attribute differences and therefore signification to what was the endless heterogeneity of the _chora_. Kristeva follows Lacan in placing the mirror phase as the first step that "opens the way for the constitution of all objects which from now on will be detached from the semiotic _chora._" and the Oedipal phase, which threatens of castration, where the process of splitting is fully achieved. Once the subject has entered into the Symbolic Order, the _chora_ will be almost completely repressed and can be viewed only as pulsional _pressure_ on symbolic language: as contradictions, meaninglessness, disruption, silences and absences in the symbolic language. The _chora_ is a rhythmic pulsion rather than a new language. It forms the heterogeneous, disruptive dimension of language, that which can never be trapped in the closure of traditional linguistic theory.

For some feminists this imaginative 'semiotic' female world and language conceived by the French feminists Cixous, Irigaray and Kristeva is a vital source of possibilities, the value of which is to receive the imagining of alternatives to the world which we, particularly women, now have. For others it dangerously hands over the world of the rational to men and keeps for women a traditionally emotive, intuitive, trans-rational and 'privileged' arena. Thus, the language question remains to be one of the most contentious areas of feminist criticism.

Adrienne Rich's concept of a common language shares similarities with the concept of language given by the French feminists. There are many other similarities between them. Both rewrite Western narratives, the one mythologically and the other predominantly psychologically. They desire to destroy the binary oppositions, including the fundamental one of male and female and invoke mythology, mysticism and the goddess. The basic
assumptions of gendered subjectivity, even the diffused and floating one that deconstruction and revised psychoanalysis suggest, are very similar, as Rich also focuses on sexuality, difference and repression. Rich, along with French feminists, champions female relationships with her "here and now".

The political effect is also similar. In 'Power and Danger: Works of a Common Woman' (1977), Adrienne Rich announced that she found the word 'revolution' a dead relic of Leftism, part of the dead-end of male politics: instead, like Cixous, Irigaray and Kristeva, she aimed at transformation through language using poetry which concentrates on the power of language. "the power of our ultimate relationship to everything in the universe. It is as if forces we can lay claim to in no other way, become present to us in sensuous form." The striking suggestiveness, the valorizing of poetry of chant, incantation, and dream, provides expression found no where else: "Think of the deprivation of women living for centuries without a poetry which spoke of women together, of women alone, of women as anything but the fantasies of men. Think of the hunger unnamed and unnameable, the sensations mistranslated."
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