

Critical Insights: Feminism

“Part of the “Critical Insights” series, *Feminism* includes an introduction by Reema Faris, four essays under the “Critical Context” heading, nine essays under “Critical Readings,” and a resources section with a list of other feminist texts and bibliography. **The perspectives presented are broad and represent a wide range of writers, theoretical approaches, and texts.** The four critical context essays center the text. The first provides a “historical approach” to feminist criticism, the second offers a primer on the field, the third focuses on critical reading through an examination of the female speaker in Thomas Campion’s poetry, and the fourth compares and contrasts the rhetoric of Margaret Fuller and Ida B. Wells. The critical readings cover fiction, poetry, film, essay, and fable, both classic and contemporary. **Faris’s excellent introduction situates the text,** and she concludes by observing that “justice will only be attained if society values each individual, no matter their differences.” **This volume brings value to the myriad experiences of women and honors their individual voices. Summing Up: Recommended. Lower- and upper-division undergraduates; graduate students; general readers.”**

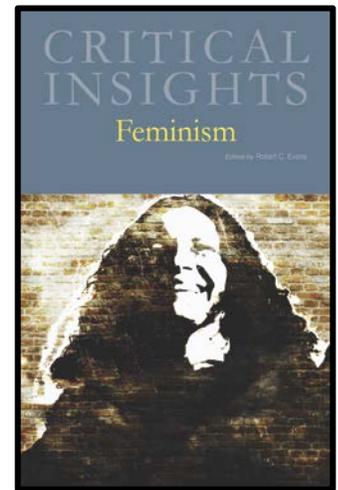
– CHOICE, 2021

“Feminism brings to the forefront issues of gender, sexuality, race, class, among others. Feminist theory, when applied to literature, helps us to better understand society’s perception of certain populations over time and begin to unpack what that means for the future. ***Critical Insights: Feminism* gives readers an introduction to feminist theory and the various ways in which it can be used to better understand literature.**

Editor Robert C. Evans is the I.B. Young Professor of English and Philosophy at Auburn University at Montgomery. His publications focus on topics such as Renaissance literature, literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, short fiction, critical theory and women writers. Every chapter in *Critical Insights: Feminism* is an essay written by a different academic author...

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FULL
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REVIEW



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“all centering around the theme of feminism. Furthermore, each chapter is centered around a different piece of literature and those pieces range from Shakespearean plays to modern day novels. **The authors each take their own approaches to dissecting their chosen works, giving the reader a chance to see a wide range of ways in which feminism can be used to better understand literature.**

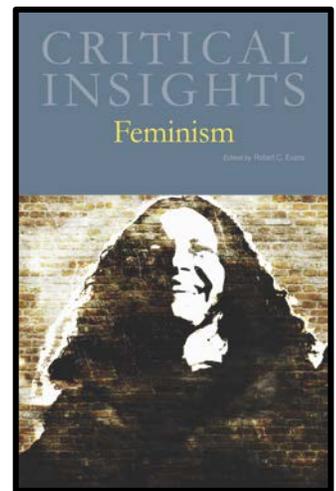
The "Critical Contexts" section **provides the reader with a base of knowledge about feminist theory and how it can apply to literature.** In one chapter, Frederick Kiefer uses a historical approach to better understand costuming, props and stage direction and its portrayal of Ophelia in Shakespeare's Hamlet. Joyce Ahn, in her chapter, makes the argument that the use of feminist criticism is on the rise and walks readers through its use in understanding literature over time. In another chapter, Robert Evans explores the subtleties of Thomas Campion's representation of female voices in his poems through a method called close reading. Nanette Rasband Hilton, in her chapter, compares and contrasts the rhetoric of Ida B. Wells and Margaret Fuller and the social justice underpinnings of their early works. **This, in my opinion, is the best section of this book. It is the section upon which everything else builds and introduces readers to diverse approaches to applying a feminist lens to literary theory.**

The "Critical Readings" section takes the context from the first section and begins applying it to different readings. The authors of these chapters focus on the portrayal of women, gender stereotypes, race, class, etc. in various forms of literature over time. The section begins by looking at poet Emily Dickinson and by the end we've made our way forward in history all the way to contemporary author Margaret Atwood. At the very end there is a resources section with additional works on feminism so that readers can continue to learn more about the topic.

This book serves as a great introduction to the basics of feminist theory and its applications to literature. It includes a wide variety of perspectives and methodologies for applying a feminist lens but does not get too heavy making it easy for everyone to understand. ATG Reviewer Rating: I need this in my library. (I want to be able to get up from my desk and grab this book off the shelf, if it's not checked out.)

- *Against the Grain*, 2021

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