

# FEMINIST LITERARY THEORY

A R E A D E R

S E C O N D  
E D I T I O N



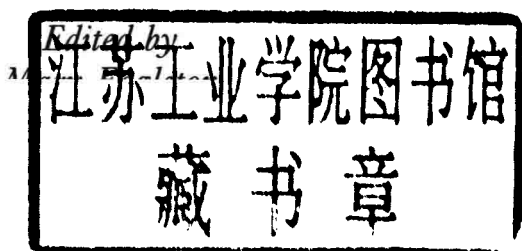
*Edited by*  
*Mary Eagleton*



# FEMINIST LITERARY THEORY

A Reader

Second Edition



 **BLACKWELL**  
Publishers

This collection and introductory material copyright © Mary Eagleton 1986, 1996

First published 1986

Reprinted 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990 (twice),

1992, 1993, 1994

Second edition published 1996

2 4 6 8 10 9 7 5 3 1

Blackwell Publishers Ltd

108 Cowley Road

Oxford OX4 1JF

UK

Blackwell Publishers Inc.

238 Main Street

Cambridge, Massachusetts 02142

USA

All rights reserved. Except for the quotation of short passages for the purposes of criticism and review, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Except in the United States of America, this book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, resold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

*British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data*

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

Feminist literary theory: a reader/edited by Mary Eagleton. —2nd ed.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-631-19734-6 (pbk.)

1. Feminist literary criticism. I. Eagleton, Mary.

PN98.W64F44 1995

95-13569

801'.95'082—dc20

CIP

Typeset in Ehrhardt in 10.5/12 pt

by Pure Tech India Ltd., Pondicherry

Printed in Great Britain by Hartnolls Limited, Bodmin, Cornwall

This book is printed on acid-free paper

## Preface to the Second Edition

In my 1986 preface to the first edition of this *Reader*, I explained that my motivation in producing it had related, largely, to my role as a teacher constructing new courses. I wrote then:

The idea for this reader sprang directly from the difficulties I faced in putting together those courses. As I sifted through book after book and article after article I became aware not only of the quantity of feminist literary criticism that has been published over the last 15 to 20 years but also of the absence of any introduction to feminist literary theory. The pedagogic problem confronting me was how to fill that gap, how to offer students some understanding of the theoretical context without involving them in endless hours searching through the back numbers of journals.

Clearly the situation has in some ways changed and in other ways been exacerbated since then. Ten years on, the quantity, variety and complexity of feminist literary work seems to have increased exponentially and with that the need for introductory collections for the many students arriving in higher education with a keen level of interest in literary feminism but little knowledge of it. Indeed, these introductions to feminist literary studies are now very readily available. The words quoted above about the lack of them referred to 1982 when I had just begun thinking about the *Reader*. By the time it was published, the first surveys – K. K. Ruthven's *Feminist Literary Studies: An Introduction* (1984) and Toril Moi's *Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory* (1985) – and the first collections of theoretical essays – Gayle Greene and Coppélia Kahn's *Making a Difference: Feminist Literary Criticism* (1985) and Elaine Showalter's *The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature and Theory* (1986) – had started to appear. Now we enjoy a plethora of readers, surveys, collections of representative essays, retrospective studies, titles with a specific focus, titles with a wide brief, all designed to engage the new reader.

It is still a research necessity, often a pleasure, to hunt through back numbers of journals. However, some of the journal articles I used in 1986

have subsequently been anthologized many times and attained a kind of canonical status: for example, Adrienne Rich's 'Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence'; Bonnie Zimmerman's 'What Has Never Been: An Overview of Lesbian Feminist Literary Criticism'; Barbara Smith's 'Toward a Black Feminist Criticism'. Other critics, already 'stars' or 'emergent stars' in 1986 have continued to shine – Elaine Showalter, Sandra Gilbert, Susan Gubar, Toril Moi, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'the French'. This process of canonization is both inevitable and worrying. In revising this reader I felt strongly the innate conservatism of the activity. How can one look at the history of feminist literary studies without mentioning Showalter, Gilbert and Gubar, Zimmerman, Moi, . . . : they have been so influential, so central to certain movements or moments. Yet, in so doing, one is reaffirming a handful of particular perspectives and denying access to others. I have tried to respond to this problem in several ways: by raising canon formation as a critical issue, by finding space for non-canonical voices, by discovering extracts which undermine given positions or query the premises and approach of an earlier extract – in short, by trying to open up debates rather than pin them down. However, at the same time, I am aware of the necessary limitations of space; I know that all selections are fashioned through the interests, ignorance and bias of the selector; and I must not fool myself, or the reader, with the fantasy of producing some all-embracing text. The wise reader will both learn from the material and be questioning about it: what are the political and cultural forces that permit us to hear certain voices and not others; whom are we hearing; whom are we not; what are the consequences?

Some of the additions and changes since the first edition respond to research needs. All the extracts are now dated so that arguments can be historically placed and readers can get some sense of how debates shift and develop. An index and a bibliography of the extracts have been included to help access material. Footnotes have been supplemented to give indications of further reading or to point to links across the chapters. Most of the extracts of the first edition are still included. I feel they have stood the test of time. Indeed, as I indicate above, many have now become key texts. Those few extracts that have been omitted lose their place not because of any inadequacy but because the argument has been covered elsewhere.

New material has been introduced throughout the *Reader*. In choosing this material I was not looking for any consensus or party line, rather for differences of viewpoint while at the same time, trying to discern some of the major trends of the last ten years. Three developments in particular have been stressed: firstly, the growing diversity of Black feminisms;

secondly, the continuing influence of and critiques about what has become known as 'French feminism', though the term alone is cause for dispute; thirdly, the fundamental political impact on feminism of postmodernist theories. Moreover, within particular chapters some new emphases have emerged. In the discussion of literary production in chapter 2, I have taken into account a wider sense of the production process with extracts that relate to publishing practices, newspaper reviews, setting up one's own press and the author's relation to her market. In chapter 3 on genre, I have switched the focus away from romance fiction to allow space for a consideration of a larger range of genre fictions and for a fuller appreciation of the political meanings of women's use of different generic forms. In chapter 5, the discussion of difference has broadened to reading alongside writing while the debates about positionality versus identity link with arguments from postmodernism and also with the vexed discussions, given new impetus in the late eighties, concerning the place of men in feminism.

The inclusion of theories of postmodernism has warranted a new chapter, focusing chiefly on postmodernist theories of subjectivity. The postmodernist questioning of, amongst other things, the definition of 'woman' (and, similarly, 'man'), the possibility of a female collectivity, the progressiveness of an egalitarian, humanist ethic, the validity of concepts of truth, identity or a discernible female history radically shook the dominant conventions of Anglo-American feminism during the latter years of the eighties. By the nineties, other critiques had emerged, well able to hold their own with postmodernism but keen to get the political needs of women back at the top of the agenda and willing to re-value the pioneering work of the generation of '68.

Readers of my first edition will know that short extracts have been characteristic of my approach. I appreciate that some readers have been irritated by this, feeling that they were just getting to grips with the argument when it stopped. A few of the new extracts in this edition are longer, particularly where the debate is very dense, but, generally, I have kept to passages which succinctly summarize one or two important points. The aim is to provide readers with a taster – if you want a different metaphor, a snap-shot – and my hope is that they will then pursue further the ideas that interest them. In this wide variety of material – 113 extracts in all – surely all but the most intransigent will find something to absorb or provoke. You can see here the connection with my original pedagogic needs: for large groups of heterogeneous students a teacher needs large amounts of heterogeneous material.

I owe thanks to various people in helping me with this second edition. Firstly, to the teachers and students who have commented on the first

edition and told me their likes and dislikes; I have profited greatly over the years from this feedback. In this role, I must especially thank Judy Giles who generously puts at my disposal the insights of her own feminist literary teaching. I am grateful to the Librarian and library staff of the University College of Ripon and York St John for their ready willingness to help with research needs and to Chris Butler and the Research Management Group at the same institution for providing assistance at a vital time. Carol Abel with her exemplary word-processing skills was the embodiment of that assistance and greatly eased my task in the final stages. The friendly chivvyng of Simon Prosser at Basil Blackwell both initiated and supported the new edition. My greatest debt is always to David Pierce.

## Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge permission to use the following copyright material:

**Linda Alcoff:** extract from 'Cultural Feminism Versus Post-Structuralism: The Identity Crisis in Feminist Theory' in *Signs*, 13:3 (1988), copyright 1988 by The University of Chicago. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission of The University of Chicago Press.

**Gloria Anzaldúa:** extract from *Borderlands/ La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, © 1987 by Gloria Anzaldúa. Reprinted by permission of Aunt Lute Books.

**Nancy Armstrong:** extract from *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel*, Copyright © 1987 by Oxford University Press, Inc. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.

**Isobel Armstrong:** extract from 'Christina Rossetti: Diary of a Feminist Reading' in Sue Roe (ed): *Women Reading Women's Writings* (1987), Copyright © Sue Roe. Reprinted by permission of Harvester Wheatsheaf and of St. Martin's Press, Incorporated.

**Margaret Atwood:** extract from 'Paradoxes and Dilemmas, the Woman as Writer' in *Women in the Canadian Mosaic*, edited by Gwen Matheson (Peter Martin Associates, 1976). Reprinted by permission of Phoebe Larmore Literary Agency on behalf of the author.

**Elizabeth Baines:** extract from 'Naming the Fictions', a talk presented to the Women's Writing Conference, © 1986 Elizabeth Baines. Reprinted by permission of the author.

**Michèle Barrett:** extract from 'Feminism and the Definition of Cultural Politics' in *Feminism, Culture & Politics*, edited by Rosalind Brunt and Caroline Rowan (Lawrence & Wishart Ltd, London, 1982). Reprinted by permission of the publishers. Extract from *Women's Oppression Today*, (London, Verso, 1980), Copyright © 1980, 1986 by Michèle Barrett. Reprinted by kind permission of Verso and the author.



**Catherine Belsey:** extract from *Critical Practice* (Methuen & Co, 1980), Copyright © Catherine Belsey 1980. Reprinted by permission of Routledge.

**Seyla Benhabib:** extract from 'Feminism and the Question of Post Modernism' in *The Polity Reader in Gender Studies* (Polity, 1994). Reprinted by permission of Polity Press.

**Black Woman Talk Collective:** extract from 'Black Woman Talk' reprinted from *Feminist Review* no. 17, © Black Woman Talk Collective. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.

**Rachel Bowlby:** extract from 'Flight Reservations: The Anglo-American/French Divide in Feminist Criticism' in *Still Crazy After All These Years: Women, Writing and Psychoanalysis* (Routledge, 1992), Copyright © Rachel Bowlby 1992. Reprinted by permission of Routledge.

**Rosi Braidotti:** extract from *Nomadic Subjects* (Columbia University Press, 1994), Copyright © 1994. Reprinted with permission of the publisher.

**Judith Butler:** extract from *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990), Copyright © 1990 by Routledge, Chapman & Hall Inc. Reprinted by permission of the publisher, Routledge, New York.

**Barbara Christian:** 'The Race for Theory' in Linda Kauffman (ed.), *Gender and Theory: Dialogues on Feminist Criticism* (B Blackwell, 1989). Reprinted by permission of Blackwell Publishers.

**Hélène Cixous:** extract from 'The Laugh of Medusa', in *Signs* 1:4 (1976), translated by K Cohen & P Cohen, copyright 1976 by the University of Chicago. All rights reserved. Extract from 'Castration or Decapitation' in *Signs* 7:1 (1981), Copyright 1981 by the University of Chicago. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission of the author and of The University of Chicago Press.

**Rosalind Coward:** extract from *Female Desire: Women's Sexuality Today*, (Grafton Books). Reprinted by permission of HarperCollins Publishers Ltd.

**Elizabeth Cowie, Claire Johnston, Cora Kaplan, Mary Kelly, Jacqueline Rose and Marie Yates (The Feminist Anthology Collective):** extract from 'Representation vs. Communication' in *No Turning Back: Writings from the Women's Liberation Movement 1975-1980* (First published by The Women's Press, 1981). Reprinted by permission of the authors.

**Anne Cranny-Francis:** extract from *Feminist Fiction* (Polity, 1990) Copyright © Anne Cranny-Francis 1990. Reprinted by permission of Polity Press.

**Jonathan Culler:** extract from 'Reading as a Woman' in *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism* (London, Routledge, 1983). Reprinted by permission of Routledge.

**Mary Ellmann:** extracts from *Thinking About Women*, (Macmillan/ Harcourt Brace 1968, Virago 1979), Copyright © 1968 by Mary Ellmann. Reprinted by permission of Macmillan Press Ltd, and Harcourt Brace & Company.

**Shoshana Felman:** extract from 'Women and Madness: The Critical Phallacy' in *Diacritics* 5:4 (1975). Reprinted by permission of the Johns Hopkins University Press.

**Rita Felski:** extracts from *Beyond Feminist Aesthetics: Feminist Literature and Social Change* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press 1989). Copyright 1989 by Rita Felski. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.

**Judith Fetterley:** extract from *The Resisting Reader* (Indiana, 1978). Reprinted by permission of Indiana University Press.

**Nancy Fraser & Linda J Nicholson:** extract from 'Social Criticism without Philosophy: An Encounter between Feminism and Postmodernism' in *Feminism/Postmodernism* edited by Linda J Nicholson (1990). Reprinted by permission of the publisher, Routledge, New York.

**Diana Fuss:** extract from *Essentially Speaking: Feminism, Nature and Difference* (1989) Copyright © 1989 by Routledge, Chapman & Hall Inc. Reprinted by permission of the publisher, Routledge, New York.

**Henry Louis Gates, Jr.:** extract from 'Introduction: Writing "Race" and the difference it makes', in Gates (ed.), *'Race' Writing and Difference* (University of Chicago Press, 1986), copyright the University of Chicago, 1985, 1986. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.

**Sandra M Gilbert and Susan Gubar:** extract from *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (Yale University Press), copyright © 1979 by Yale University, copyright © 1984 by Sandra M Gilbert and Susan Gubar. Reprinted by permission of the publishers. Extract from their Introduction to *Shakespeare's Sisters: Feminist Essays on Women Poets*. Reprinted by Permission of the publisher, Indiana University Press.

**Donna Haraway:** extracts from 'A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s', *Socialist Review* 80, (March/April 1985). Copyright Center for Social Research and Education, 1985. Reprinted by permission of Duke University Press.

**Stephen Heath:** extract from *The Sexual Fix* (Macmillan, 1982), copyright © 1982 by Stephen Heath. Reprinted by permission of Macmillan Press Ltd.

**bell hooks:** 'Postmodern Blackness' from *Yearning: Race, Gender and Cultural Politics* (London, Turnaround, 1991) Copyright © Gloria Watkins, 1991. Reprinted by permission of Turnaround.

**Luce Irigaray:** extract from *This Sex Which Is Not One*, translated from the French by Catherine Porter with Carolyn Burke. Copyright © 1985 by Cornell University Press. Reprinted by permission of the publisher, Cornell University Press.

**Rosemary Jackson:** extract from *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion* (Methuen & Co.). Reprinted by permission of Routledge.

**Mary Jacobus:** extract from *Reading Women: Essays in Feminist Criticism*, Copyright © 1986. Reprinted with permission of the publisher, Columbia University Press. Extract from 'The Buried Letter' in *Women Writing and Writing About Women* edited by Mary Jacobus (Croom Helm). Reprinted by permission of Routledge.

**Alice A Jardine:** extract from *Gynesis: Configurations of Woman and Modernity*, Copyright © 1985 by Cornell University Press. Reprinted by permission of the publisher, Cornell University Press.

**Ann Rosalind Jones:** extract from 'Writing the Body: Toward an Understanding of L'Ecriture Feminine' reprinted, in part, from *Feminist Studies*, vol. 7, no. 2 (Summer, 1981): 247-63, here by permission of the publisher, Feminist Studies Inc., c/o Women's Studies Program, University Of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742.

**Kadiatu Kanneh:** extract from 'Love, Mourning and Metaphor: Terms of Identity' in Isobel Armstrong (ed.) *New Feminist Discourses: Critical Essay on Theories and Texts* (Routledge, 1992) Copyright © Kadiatu Kanneh, 1992. Reprinted by permission of Routledge.

**Peggy Kamuf:** extract from 'Writing Like a Woman' in Sally McConnell-Ginet et al. (eds) *Women and Language in Literature and Society* (Praeger, 1980). Copyright © 1980 by Praeger Publishers. Reprinted by permission of Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc., Westport, CT.

**Cora Kaplan:** extract from the Introduction to *Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Aurora Leigh and Other Poems*, (first published by The Women's Press Ltd, 34 Great Sutton Street, London EC1V 0DX, 1978). Reprinted by permission of the author.

**Annette Kolodny:** extract from 'Dancing Through the Minefield' in *Feminist Studies*, vol. 6, no. 1 (Spring, 1980), © Annette Kolodny, 1980; all rights reserved. Reprinted by permission of the author.

**Julia Kristeva:** extract from 'A Question of Subjectivity – An Interview' in Philip Rice and Patricia Waugh (eds) *Modern Literary Theory: A Reader* (Edward Arnold, 1989). Reprinted by permission of Hodder Headline. Extract from 'Woman can Never Be Defined' in Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron (eds): *New French Feminism: An Anthology* (1981). Reprinted by permission of Prentice Hall/Harvester Wheatsheaf and the author. Extract from 'Talking about *Polylogue*' translated by Sean Hand, in Toril Moi (ed.): *French Feminist Thought: A Reader* (B Blackwell, 1987). Reprinted by permission of Blackwell Publishers.

**Teresa de Lauretis:** extract from 'Upping the Anti (sic) in Feminist Theory' in *Conflicts in Feminism* edited by Marianne Hirsch and Evelyn Fox-Keller (1990). Reprinted by permission of the publisher, Routledge, New York.

**Paul Lauter:** extract from 'Race and gender in the shaping of the American literary canon', in Judith Newton and Deborah Rosenfelt (eds): *Feminist Criticism and Social Change: Sex, Class and Race in Literature and Culture* (Methuen & Co, 1985). Reprinted by permission of Routledge.

**Sarah LeFanu:** extract from *In the Chinks of the World Machine: Feminism and Science Fiction*, (first published by The Women's Press Ltd, 1988). Reprinted by permission of the author, The Women's Press Ltd.

**Alison Light:** extract from 'Feminism and the Literary Critic' in *LTP: Journal of Literature, Teaching, Politics*, reprinted by permission of the author. Extract from *Forever England: Femininity, Literature and Conservatism Between the Wars* (Routledge, London 1991) Copyright © Alison Light 1991. Reprinted by permission of the author and Routledge.

**Terry Lovell:** extracts from *Consuming Fiction* (London, Verso, 1987), Copyright © 1987 by Verso and Terry Lovell. Reprinted by kind permission of Verso and the author.

**Deborah E McDowell:** extract from 'New Directions for Black Feminist Criticism', in *Black American Literature Forum*, vol. 14, no. 4, Winter 1980. Copyright © 1980 Indiana State University. Reprinted by permission of the author and the publisher, African American Review.

**Nancy K Miller:** 'Parables and Politics' from *Paragraph*, vol. 8, 1986. Reprinted by permission of Edinburgh University Press.

**Trinh T. Minh-Ha:** extract *Woman, Native, Other* (Indiana, 1989), reprinted by permission of Indiana University Press.

**Juliet Mitchell:** extract from *Women: The Longest Revolution* (Virago Press/Pantheon Books), Copyright © 1966, 1972, 1974, 1975, 1977, 1982, 1983, 1984 by Juliet Mitchell, reprinted by permission of the author and of Pantheon Books, a division of Random House, Inc.

**Ellen Moers:** extracts from *Literary Women: The Great Writers*. Copyright © 1976, 1977 by Ellen Moers. Used by permission of Doubleday, a division of Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc., and of Curtis Brown Ltd., New York.

**Chandra Talpade Mohanty:** 'Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses' from Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo and Lourdes Torres (eds), *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism* (Indiana, 1991). Reprinted by permission of Indiana University Press.

**Toril Moi:** extract from *Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory* (Methuen & Co). Reprinted by permission of Routledge.

**Lauretta Ngcobo (ed):** Editor's Introduction from *Let It Be Told: Essays by Black Women in Britain* (London, Pluto Press, 1987), Copyright to Introduction, © Lauretta Ngcobo 1987. Reprinted by permission of Pluto Press.

**Joyce Carol Oates:** extract from 'Is There a Female Voice?' in *Gender and Literary Voice, Women & Literature I*, edited by Janet Todd, (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1980) Copyright © 1980 Holmes & Meier Publishers Inc. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

**Carol Ohmann:** extract from 'Emily Bronte in the Hands of Male Critics' in *College English*, 32:8, May 1971, Copyright © 1971 by the National Council of Teachers of English. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

**Tillie Olsen:** extracts from *Silences*, Copyright © 1965, 1972, 1978 by Tillie Olsen. Used by permission of Delacorte Press/Seymour Lawrence,

a division of Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc., and of the Abner Stein Agency.

**Mary Poovey:** extract from 'Feminism and Deconstruction' reprinted, in part, from *Feminist Studies*, vol. 14, no. 1 (Spring 1988): 57-63, by permission of the publisher, Feminist Studies, Inc., c/o Women's Studies Program, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742.

**Janice Radway:** extract from 'Women Read the Romance: The Interaction of Text and Context', reprinted, in part, from *Feminist Studies*, vol. 9, no. 1 (Spring 1983): 53-78, reprinted by permission of the publisher, Feminist Studies Inc., c/o Women's Studies Program, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742.

**Cheri Register:** 'American Feminist Literary Criticism: A Bibliographical Introduction' from *Feminist Literary Criticism: Explorations in Theory*, 2nd edition, edited by Josephine Donovan, copyright © 1989 by The University Press of Kentucky. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.

**Adrienne Rich:** extracts from 'When we Dead Awaken: Writing as Revision' from *On Lies, Secrets, and Silence: Selected Prose 1966-1978* by Adrienne Rich are reprinted by permission of the author and W.W. Norton & Company, Inc. Copyright © 1979 by W. W. Norton & Company Inc. 'Aunt Jennifer's Tigers', 'The Loser', 'Orion', and the lines from 'Snapshots of a Daughter-in-Law' from *Collected Early Poems: 1950-1970* by Adrienne Rich are reprinted by permission of the author and W. W. Norton & Co. Inc. Copyright © 1993 by Adrienne Rich. Copyright © 1967, 1963, 1962, 1961, 1960, 1959, 1958, 1957, 1956, 1955, 1954, 1953, 1952, 1951 by Adrienne Rich. Copyright © 1984, 1975, 1971, 1969, 1966 by W. W. Norton & Co. Inc. Extracts from 'Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence' from *Blood, Bread, and Poetry: Selected Prose 1979-1985* by Adrienne Rich, reprinted by permission of the author, W. W. Norton & Co. Inc., and Virago Press. Copyright © 1986 by Adrienne Rich.

**Jacqueline Rose:** extract from 'Femininity and its Discontents', in *Sexuality in the Field of Vision* (London, Verso, 1986), Copyright © 1986 by Verso and Jacqueline Rose. Reprinted by kind permission of Verso and the author.

**K K Ruthven:** extract from *Feminist Literary Studies: an Introduction* (Cambridge University Press). Reprinted by permission of the author and publisher.

**Robert Scholes:** extract from 'Reading like a man' in *Men in Feminism* edited by Alice Jardine and Paul Smith (1987), Copyright © Methuen Inc 1987. Reprinted by permission of the publisher, Routledge, New York.

**Susan Sellers (ed.):** 'Conversations' from *Writing Differences: Readings from the Seminar of Hélène Cixous* (Open University Press, 1988), Copyright © the Editor and the contributors, 1988. Reprinted by permission of Susan Sellers and the Open University Press.

**Elaine Showalter:** extract from 'Towards a Feminist Poetics' in *Women Writing and Writing About Women* edited by Mary Jacobus (Croom Helm). Reprinted by permission of Routledge. Extract from *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Brontë to Lessing*, (Princeton, 1977/Virago, 1978), Copyright © 1977 by Princeton University Press. Reprinted by permission of the author and of Princeton University Press.

**Kate Soper:** extract from 'Feminism, Humanism and Postmodernism'. This article first appeared in *Radical Philosophy* 55 (Summer, 1990). Reprinted by permission of Radical Philosophy Ltd.

**Jane Spencer:** extract from *The Rise of the Woman Novelist: From Aphra Behn to Jane Austen* (Blackwell, 1987). Reprinted by permission of Blackwell Publishers.

**Domna C Stanton:** extract from 'Language and Revolution', in *The Future of Difference*, Hester Eisenstein and Alice Jardine, eds., copyright © 1980 by the Barnard College Women's Center. Reprinted by permission of Rutgers University Press.

**Judith Still:** extract from 'A Feminine Economy: Some Preliminary Thoughts' in Helen Wilcox et al. (eds): *The Body and the Text: Hélène Cixous, Reading and Teaching* (1990). Copyright © Helen Wilcox, 1990. Reprinted by permission of Harvester Wheatsheaf and of St. Martin's Press, Incorporated.

**Janet Todd:** extract from *Feminist Literary History* (Polity, 1988), Copyright © Janet Todd 1988. Reprinted by permission of Polity Press.

**Alice Walker:** extracts from *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens*, Copyright © 1974 by Alice Walker first published in the UK by The Women's Press, 1984. Reprinted by permission of David Higham Associates on behalf of the author and of Harcourt Brace & Company.

**Michelene Wandor:** extract from 'The Impact of Feminism on the Theatre' in *Feminist Review*, no. 18. Reprinted by permission of the author.

**Ian Watt:** extract from *The Rise of the Novel* (Chatto & Windus). Reprinted by permission of Random House UK Ltd.

**Patricia Waugh:** extract from *Feminine Fictions: Revisiting the Postmodern* (Routledge, 1989) Copyright © Patricia Waugh, 1989. Reprinted by permission of Routledge.

**Chris Weedon:** extract from *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory* (Blackwell, 1987). Reprinted by permission of Blackwell Publishers.

**Linda R Williams:** extract from 'Happy Families? Feminist Reproduction and Matrilineal Thought' in Isobel Armstrong (ed.) *New Feminist Discourses* (Routledge, 1992), Copyright © Linda Williams 1992. Reprinted by permission of Routledge.

**Elizabeth Wilson:** extract from *Mirror Writing: An Autobiography* (Virago Press, 1982), copyright © Elizabeth Wilson 1982. Reprinted by permission of the author.

**Monique Wittig:** extract from 'The Straight Mind' in the collection *The Straight Mind* (Beacon, 1992). Copyright © 1992 by Monique Wittig. Reprinted by permission of Beacon Press.

**Women in Publishing:** extracts from *Reviewing the Reviews: A Woman's Place on the Book Page* (The Journeyman's Press Ltd, 1987), Copyright © Women in Publishing, 1987. Reprinted by permission of Women in Publishing.

**Virginia Woolf:** extracts from *A Room of One's Own*, copyright 1929 by Harcourt Brace & Company and renewed 1957 by Leonard Woolf, and from 'Professions for Women' in *The Death of a Moth and Other Essays*, copyright 1942 by Harcourt Brace & Company and renewed 1970 by Marjorie T Parsons, Executrix. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Chatto & Windus (Random House UK Ltd) and Harcourt Brace & Company.

**Bonnie Zimmerman:** extract from 'What has Never Been: An Overview of Lesbian Feminist Literary Criticism', reprinted, in part, from *Feminist Studies*, vol. 7, no. 3 (Fall 1981): 451-75, reprinted by permission of the publisher, Feminist Studies Inc., c/o Women's Studies Program, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742.

Despite every effort to trace and contact copyright owners prior to publication this has not always been possible. We apologise for any apparent infringement of copyright and if notified, we will be pleased to rectify any errors or omissions at the earliest opportunity.



# Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| <i>Preface</i>   | xi |
| <i>Acknowledgements</i>  | xv |
| <b>1 Finding a Female Tradition</b>                                    |    |
| Introduction   | 1  |
| Extracts from:   |    |
| <i>A Room of One's Own</i> VIRGINIA WOOLF                              | 9  |
| <i>Literary Women</i> ELLEN MOERS                                      | 10 |
| <i>A Literature of Their Own:</i>                                      |    |
| <i>British Women Novelists from Brontë to Lessing</i>                  |    |
| ELAINE SHOWALTER   | 14 |
| 'What Has Never Been: An Overview of Lesbian Feminist                  |    |
| Literary Criticism' BONNIE ZIMMERMAN                                   | 18 |
| 'Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence' ADRIENNE RICH       | 24 |
| 'Saving the Life That Is Your Own: The Importance of Models in the     |    |
| Artist's Life ALICE WALKER   | 30 |
| Title Essay <i>In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens</i> ALICE WALKER      | 33 |
| <i>Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory</i> CHRIS WEEDON     | 36 |
| 'Race and Gender in the Shaping of the American Literary Canon:        |    |
| A Case Study from the Twenties' PAUL LAUTER                            | 39 |
| <i>Women's Oppression Today: Problems in Marxist Feminist Analysis</i> |    |
| MICHÈLE BARRETT  | 45 |
| 'Writing "Race" and the Difference it Makes' HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR     | 46 |
| 'Parables and Politics: Feminist Criticism in 1986' NANCY K. MILLER    | 48 |
| <i>Reading Woman: Essays in Feminist Criticism</i> MARY JACOBUS        | 51 |
| 'Happy Families? Feminist Reproduction and Matrilineal Thought'        |    |
| LINDA R. WILLIAMS  | 52 |
| 'What Women's Eyes See' VIVIANE FORRESTER                              | 56 |
| 'Women and Madness: The Critical Phallacy' SHOSHANA FELMAN             | 58 |