

## The Evolution of Narrative Virtues Among Contemporary American Women Authors: A Comprehensive Overview

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### Abstract

The research aims to compare contemporary American Women's literature concerning their narrative technique and the evolution of narrative virtues among contemporary American women authors. Meiliana believes that comparative literature explores connections between literary works, examining sources, topics, mythologies, genres, creative techniques, social movements, and trends, breaking traditional national and international boundaries, and determining universal human interactions. Contemporary women's writings showcase a variety of involvements, reflecting the feminine space in modern times. This variety in literature is too substantial to be considered a universal one, as it reflects harmony and agreement within the group, despite gender differences. In contemporary times, it is crucial to acknowledge the contributions of women authors to the American tradition. Recognizing their distinct traditions, place of origin, race, situations, and personal expression is essential for a comprehensive literary history that respects the unique identities of these women and their contributions to the American tradition.

Keywords; Narrative techniques, contemporary, American, women's writings, comparative

### Introduction

*“Your biographies never understand  
Your father's pain as he sells his stock  
And another dream goes  
And though you're poor it isn't poverty that  
Concerns you”*

— Nikki Giovanni

Julia Howe is the writer of *Battle Hymn of the Republic*. When her work related to her marital relationship titled, *Passion Flowers* was circulated, her spouse threatened her that he would snatch her kids away, but after a few months of separation, they were reunited (Showalter 2009). As a result, women have additional challenges as a result of their gender and greater strength is required to become authors in general and autobiographical or confessional authors

in particular. In contemporary times, "Feminism" is discredited and criticized, demonized, and thought to be obsolete. This is evident in "literary criticism" just as it has been in other areas of society, but these pieces focus on the newfound options, uses, and prospects of "feminist" philosophy in this field. Barbara Johnson shows how contemporary analysis of a variety of writings i.e. "legal, literary, cinematic, philosophical, and psychoanalytical" show that the tensions and ambiguities that plague femininity are not indicators of a "dead end, but of a creative turning point." She elaborates on the significance of literary writings as she asserts, "Literature is essential for feminism because it is the place where impasses can be kept and opened for examination, where questions can be guarded and not forced into a premature validation of the available paradigms. The literature appears not as a predetermined set of works but as a mode of cultural work, the work of making readable those impossible and necessary things that cannot yet be spoken." (Johnson)

American writing is "transnational/post-national/national... trans/motion," written by authors who were not American by birth but subsequently acquired nationality, resulting in twofold identities, American-born authors whose artistic or imaginative insight is motivated through a "trans-American" logic of identification, affinity, or justice, in whatever capacity, or a broader category of American-born authors who are the offspring of "immigrants." Moreover, authors belonging to "mixed Native American and non-Native-American origin", whose idealistic and imaginative insight is relative to multinational literature, creativity, and authenticities wherein the accounts express contrast. They speculate multiple distinct rehearses of the notion of the "trans-internal and trans-external." There are those authors as well who do not belong to America but they speak of its people (Raljevic 15).

"The essence of literature is anthropology. To care about literature is to care about "people" themselves. Literary works represent social culture and have a very profound impact on people. American literary works have long been concerned and loved by the world, and to a certain extent represent the world's mainstream thoughts and interests. Therefore, the embodiment of female consciousness in American literature will help more female compatriots to see how the women in the works use their wisdom and courage to fight against the oppression and exploitation of the patriarchal society, and how to overthrow the unreasonable rule and disintegrate male hegemony, thereby awakening women's subjectivity in real life,

getting rid of the "other" position, combining the principles of feminism with their own unique life experience in practice, and sending out the true voice of women to the world. At the same time, it also inspired the growth of more female writers. For a long time, women were banned from writing, and writing was a right reserved for men with cultural capital in the bourgeoisie. Even after the emergence of female writers, their works were often ignored and despised by society and male writers." (Cai 2)

Women's literature till the twentieth was labeled as "domestic literature" by the male classics, focusing only on emotions and sentiments, devoid of any rationality and intellectual self. The male interpreted the "mad or monstrous women," as a lady with unmanageable urges, whereas the female writers sensationalize their yearning to admit the rebukes and scorn the chauvinistic culture in a quest to discard them. This dual aspect of a female author presented a dual woman, pertaining author's double, a reflection of her fret and furry at the same time. Thus, women's writing developed and evolved as an intricate, distinct, and fascinating spectacle when it is theorized in a "feminist" framework. Literature is critiqued in fresh and varied interpretations in contemporary times where "sentimental fiction" is endorsed as a fictional form encompassing nation-state, status, displacement, and artistic invention. Women's writings then initiated "ant-sentimental self-consciousness," in the form of "female Bildungsroman," forestalling complication, abstruse characters, and sarcastic impartiality. This form was an amalgamation of modern narratives and traditional sentimentality. It has recently attained the role of an "agency," to upshot revolution, though it is of native and provisional form.

### Literature Review

The hypothetical modifications developed through the "public," concurrently propose traditions, methods, and ways to reconsider the notion of "home." It is argued that as an alternative to a "haven", the "home" that traditional female writing creates was certainly not an unconcealed position, neither as a replication or promotion of the "market economy" nor as a dwelling of ferocity and hostility. To Romero, it includes the blending of the "gothic with the familiar," whereas for Amy Kaplan home life delivers the conceptual location of "legitimizing nineteenth-century American imperialism." As Zagarri notes, Search for little, often forgotten aspects of our history and use them to assist us in reassembling a confused, fractured identity. Even while their words won't reverse decades of oppression or put them in an area of power, they will likely be

able to find oneself at that archeological site and create new narratives using the small items they recover. These writers use poetry as a means of information in an effort to maneuver through affinities and commitments to their identities.

The Great Depression and World Wars instigated family closeness as an embodiment of an ideal life but the concept was smashed at the same time by the female authors who repelled the falsehood of family life and the “perfect housewife” who was made the epicenter through a male orientalist approach. In this respect, Adrienne Rich’s verse, “*Snapshots of a Daughter-in-Law*” published in the mid-twentieth century constructs and imagines an upsurge in the forthcoming era. Becker says Tillie Olsen resisted domestic scarcity and Flannery O’Connor used “Southern Gothic” advocating that “women are defined not by their perfection but by the very flaws that make them vulnerable to seduction, violence, or disappointment.” Betty Friedan explored the “myth of the contented suburban housewife.” McCarthy reconnoiters themes like infidelity, miscarriage, and separation. Coral Oates’s, “*Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?*” portrays Connie a young adult female, as defenseless in front of patriarchy suggesting the helplessness of the “traditional” explanation of a leftover female in the “domestic” sphere who will eventually be dragged from this sphere.

African writers struggle against the ideal family life or “domesticity” as it restricts and compels women to idealize only their domestic space and they are unable to broaden their horizon of possibilities, implications, and future prospects of the world outside their home space. The contemporary female protagonists struggled against the atrocities against their identity connected to their home which is their native country Marshall’s “*Brown Girl, Brownstones*,” ratifies resilience for American ethnic suppression solely for their presence. Becker elaborates on this change by informing the pretext that literature’s course was reshaped in the latter decades of the 20th century by the struggle for “civil rights”, anti-Vietnam War demonstrations, and the cultural fallout that followed. Authors like “Adrienne Rich was advocating for the revival of the foremother as African-American activists revived a long-suppressed and forgotten African-American literary legacy. Poems like Denise Levertov’s *Hypocrite Women* and texts like Tillie Olsen’s *One out of Twelve*” Becker says that the contemporary writings “publicly attempted to reinterpret the breadth of women’s writing and how it spoke directly to women while excluding masculine influence.”

Native authors like Louise Erdrich scuffled to locate their hybrid selves amid the historical and contemporary biospheres. In *“Love Medicine”* she uses “traditional” tales in stories, a complex stream-of-consciousness-styled structure, and fantasy. The characters of her stories are in a quest to adapt themselves as natives but with strong bonds with tradition. Among natives, Silko's discreet flair replicates the “oral storytelling tradition” which is kept alive by reviving generations after generations and unpretentious utterances. Becker says that “Latinos, increased when activists tried to revitalize the connection to their historic past, while writers and artists reclaimed Aztec roots, the use of Spanish, and traditional Mexican handiwork.” Cisneros's stories dealt with the struggle to practice “Mexican myth while presenting Latinas,” constantly producing a vigorous, present-day society. Her direct, open, and upfront usage of “Spanglish”, and assurance in narrating stories for and about common men in general and women in particular propose an indispensable sketch of “Latina life” and traditions in U.S. society. Among many other Asian works, Kingston's *“The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood amongst Ghosts”* is an autobiographical narrative that is an imaginative description of her antiquity. She critiques the chauvinistic “traditions” of China affected by racial subjugation. Amy Tan in *“The Joy Luck Club”* carries on consuming traditions of “Chinese mythology” to interpret and elucidate the existence of her female characters.

External influences shape a person's personality and individuality. Several people contribute their understanding and ardent religious convictions to various conversations. Pakistani Muslim women in the United States have shifted from unconscious to conscious bargaining. They struggled to acclimatize to their new surroundings and clothing was one of the several crucial aspects. The community was confronted with the “veil” as the prevailing characteristic as it is more appropriate for them to dress modestly. Arrisa Illahi removed her head covering and dressed provocatively to provide a “hybrid” image. Therefore, she constructed a cross-cultural and trans-cultural structure by incorporating Arabic features into US constructs (Asiyah 240-44). Arab communities face racialization and demonization as a result of a “double bind” of “multiple and simultaneous oppressions,” in which prejudice, sexism, and racism coexist to create female identities and individualities. By educating literature in Texas classrooms, Nye aimed to give an alternative and unconventional narrative of the “Palestinian” experience. Her poetry, texts, and documents serve as metaphors for transitional and transient



narrative includes an ample variety of involvements as a supplementary gaudy and precise replication of the feminine space in contemporary times (Becker 2017). For the question concerning "women's tradition," and "literary lineage," a recognition of the repetitive subjects and the intersecting configurations results in the fact that the variety in their literature throughout the years is too substantial to title it as a "universal one." For Claire Buck, women's writings lie in an "unstable category." Though few critics like Roger Lonsdale consider that harmony and agreement subsist in their literature. Therefore, "women's writing" suggests the credence that "women in some sense constitute a group, however diverse, who share a position of difference based on gender" (Wikipedia).

## Analysis

### 1. Memorable characters

Maria says in "What Makes a Character Memorable?" The factors or constituents developing an unforgettable character are "relatability, depth, unique qualities, passion or motivation and flaws." Don't be afraid to give your characters flaws, that's what makes them loveable. Following "traditions", naming is an additional feature in constructing "black identity" in Morrison's narratives. "Name" is a reminder of one's predecessors, and in "Beloved," Baby Suggs keeps the name notwithstanding the suggestion of another one, but "Stamp Paid" honors himself after he murdered his spouse (Chakraborty). Contemporary authors follow the traditions to inculcate autobiographical strands into their writings taking the reality and truth from their own experiences like the character of "Beloved" by Toni Morrison. The homes, residences, slave plantations, and events are indicative of the ferocity and viciousness faced by Morrison's family by the "white people" (Sandamali 1). Moreover, the explicit slaying of "Beloved" is the collective painful link "between Sethe and her daughters." Beloved is a corporal demonstration of such pain and her part as the epitome of the pain allows "Sethe" and "Denver" to get through their painful memories (Selfridge 68).

The contemporary poetry by American women after modernism is basic in style. The poets tried morphological and methodological innovations but they made sure to induce a subjective standpoint found lacking in previous poetic works which countered the "oppressive quest for sameness." The "confessional" school of thought sparked from this very notion for which Sylvia Plath and Anne Sexton's works are acclaimed. The poetry that sprung up from the

collective and common strands of individual imperfections, fallings, and yearnings rebelled against the idealized notions of Womanhood. Plath makes use of common language to write about problematic topics such as abhorrence for the father, the ambiguous position of the mother, and her psychological delusions. Though Plath deals with the subject of mighty exquisiteness, inspiring nature, and celestial otherworldliness but the “universal” is unable to snatch away “personal” in her works. Anne Sexton's poetic works show not just her mental and emotional toils but her bodily sufferings such as “menstruation, abortion, incest, drug abuse” for which female is not very vocal. Again Adrienne Rich’s poetry ‘traditional’ poetic style “with standard line breaks and rhythmical stanzas” is integrated with “traditionally taboo” themes dealing with the renovating positioning of females in contemporary times. She tries her utmost to register the tussle of “Native American women” to exist in the middle of traditional and contemporary domains. Joy Harjo recuperates the missing “voices of her ancestors” with rhythmic verses and Silko's discreet flair replicates an “oral storytelling tradition that relies on repetition and simple language” (Becker 2017).

## 2. Seductive Plots

Reeves in “*Motherhood and Freedom in Women’s Writing after 1970*” argues that literature of motherhood reimagines “reality with care at its center”. Despite much research on women’s issues, “motherhood” still rests apprehensive. Contemporary women’s writings interpret it as a personified, non-autonomous choice that arises communally and ethnically and is grounded in “interdependence rather than self-possession.” These writings reassure and indorse a procedure of devotion that engenders a “new, feminist reality.” Alice Walker’s works locate the “black feminist Reeves texts about care outside the family after the Civil Rights movement, articulating a notion of self-elaboration that is non-sovereign, anti-austerity, and inter-subjective.” On the other hand “Maggie Nelson’s memoir, *The Argonauts*” propose apparitions of in-person renovation central to innovative notions of “pleasure in motherhood” (1).

“Testing” is a “Haitian tradition” and they attach the notion of “virtue” to a female’s “virginity.” “*Breath, Eyes, Memory*” defines the way testing is continued through generations despite being disliked. Sophie is devastated all through her life due to the distressing practice of constant checking of her “vagina to make sure she was still a virgin.” She says,

“After my marriage, whenever Joseph and I were together, I doubled... From the time a girl begins to menstruate to the time you turn her over to her husband, the mother is responsible for her purity. If I give a soiled daughter to her husband, he can shame my family, speak evil of me, and even bring her back to me. When you tested my mother and Tante Atie, couldn't you tell that they hated it? The burden was not mine alone. I hated the tests, I said. It is the most horrible thing that ever happened to me. When my husband is with me now, it gives me such nightmares that I have to bite my tongue to do it again.” (Danticat 122)

“*Love Medicine*” constructs a strongly knitted narrative with no central character (137). The book raises the question that in what ways one can label the “story” as “Ulysses” raised many queries in this context. As she provides the reader with inventiveness along with a satiating spontaneous reading, the reader is not concerned about its narration. Though there lies a probability that Erdrich challenges the traditions of a “conventional story” by delivering the audience traditional content which can supposedly please a “general reader” (Stock 120).

### 3. Imaginative Descriptions

Sandra Cisneros weaves both the distant “past and the present” to create a sizable “literary” mosaic that depicts and recreates a vibrant fusion “of Pre Columbian, Mexican, and North American cultures”. This “transmigration” goes beyond national lines of Mexican and American “imagined communities.” Touching on the traverse of this frontier, it particularly illustrates the idea of a multinational and multicultural individuals' existence. As a consequence of both their sociocultural division and multilingual legacy, the Latino population created a unique “linguistic system” that represented them through “code-switching” (Raljevic 20).

The tradition for Morrison is “history as a life lived” and not exactly “history as imagined.” She regards the author as “the truest of historians.” Morrison is of the view that writings narrate untold stories traveling through generations. “Tradition” is all that functions through imagining the “past” in the “present” taking the form of a hurting recollection “as anything dead coming back to life hurts... but it is also the path to salvation.” The return can be in the form of regaining the lost child and the story brings back an adult to show that the past is nurtured as Silko says, “I will tell you something about the stories, They aren't just entertainment. Don't be fooled.

They are all we have, you see,  
all we have to fight off  
illness and death.” (Chakraborty)

Sand is of the view that “*Imagination brought to life requires some degree of freedom from oppression.*” It is not necessary for an “Imagination” to be taken as theoretical, methodological speculation, rather for American Contemporary writers it may be a query of the “status quo or even naming things as they truly are.” Certainly, Morrison indicated a highly required profound concern regarding white consciousness notwithstanding it as a mark of modernism but presenting it as an artist. She declares in an interview with *The New Yorker*, “I can accept the labels because being a black woman writer is not a shallow place but a rich place to write from. It doesn’t limit my imagination; it expands it. It’s richer than being a white male writer because I know more and I’ve experienced more.”

Diane pens that past, trauma, and memories stay within people and they haunt them in the process of narration. Not only people, but the whole community is involved in “manipulating... the discourse” into their creative imagination, and contemporary women writers do that very well. Maya Angelo’s poetry reflects the tinges of “black consciousness” to build individuality by registering the fear and dismay of being a slave in “*Why Don’t You Sing*”

“All the earth is horror,  
and the dark night long.  
Then before the dawning,  
bright as grinning demons,  
came the fearful knowledge  
that my life was gone.”

“Fairy tales” emerged as a substantial traditional outcome during the second half of the twentieth century in interpreting the society and community in contemporary times through “Disney’s adaptations.” Plath adored “*Grimms’ Tales*” and some of her works indicate arrangement with such stories. For her, these imaginative stories operated “as a way to tell her life events.” “*The Disquieting Muses*” is a tale of an ambiguous “mother whose food, similar to the witch and functions to deceive the children (Dorka 2021).”

#### 4. Hawk-eyed Descriptions

The *Joy Luck Club* (1990) uses different “symbols” to describe the emotions, characters, traditions, and the bondage or the linkage that keeps them connected with their native places, people, and forefathers. Suyuan’s gifted her daughter a “jade pendant” calling it a “life’s importance” and its implications altered throughout her life. The “grey pendant” looked unsophisticated showing the social dissimilarities stuck between two generations but soon Suyuan passes away Jing-mei starts comprehending it as a sign of motherly affection and worry. The pendant escalates changes, not just it undergoes different interpretation but it signifies the ability of a character to allocate fresh connotations. The harsh coarse critique is then converted into words of affection in the form of an object. “Lena’s Vase” represents her marital conflicts. She positioned it on an unsteady counter though she recognized the possibility of its breakage. Similarly, she faces the endangerment of separation in her marital life. Abu-Melhim (11) is of the view that her spouse, Harold made the counter while he did coursework on construction and building. This particular fact connotes his instability for not being “supportive” and “solid” in his promises and pursuits but Lina is held responsible for both, the wrong placement of the vase and not being able to survive the marriage. Another symbol is “Lindo’s red candle... the candle has a symbolic meaning—the success of the marriage-within the Chinese culture, but within the story, it also functions as a symbol of traditional Chinese culture itself.” Lindo has a disagreement with her marriage but she is unable to oppose her society. Therefore, she covertly knock-backs her “husband’s side of the candle controlling her fate,” ultimately freeing herself from hopeless wedlock. Moreover, the “candle” also represents as a mark of “tradition,” believes and values as Melhim says, “her act of blowing out the candle would have been meaningless without an underlying, pre-established network of belief. Thus the candle symbolizes the use of tradition in claiming one’s own identity and power” (12). When Amy Tan's account of the customs and beliefs associated with the candle is compared to Plath's confession of living a "New Women's" life, the traditions are undoubtedly viewed as reviving through writing or expression. At the very least, women like Sylvia dare to say things to normalize ideas that were considered for males but disallowed for females. Sylvia lives out the adapted essentials to narrate a “ballroom dance” during a female’s amusement is the midpoint of the tale and portrays the scene in which, “The whole revolving tall glass palace hall

Where guests slide gliding into light like wine;  
Rose candles flicker on the lilac wall  
Reflecting in a million flagons' shine." (Dorka 10)

Suzan-Lori Parks' play "*Father Comes Home from the Wars*" is based on traditions as it deals with "cultural memory," as the author is in the quest of long gone history and suggests its recuperation and recovery. Parks writes, the "bones tell us what was, is, will be" and for the melody forms this drama, she is "working theatre like an incubator to create new historical events, remembering and staging historical events which, through their happening on stage, are ripe for inclusion in the canon of history." She displays tales reading and revising "history as narrated fiction" to interpret false and fabricated ideas of bygone impartiality. Moreover, she focuses on the essential prejudice of "traditional history writing." The play undergoes recuperation as it unlocks its metaphorical and emblematic spheres in performance where the traditional "black characters" repeat the tale locating and discovering individuality "anew." Park creates a "communicating space" with the recollection of hurting memories through revision (Guerrero 157). "Reformulating Freedom: Slavery, Alienation and Ambivalence in Suzan Lori Parks's "*Father Comes Home from the Wars*" describes Parks' review of past negotiates and navigates the fears of "war, slavery and race" and the acquirement of female liberty, as a comeback to rediscover past (49).

As significant in "*Ceremony*" (2006), "Native American" culture also plays an unexpected or uncomfortable role in the plot. Ts'eh assists Tayo in making this connection by engaging in "traditions" such as "sand painting, storytelling," and nature stories and this link is critical to Tayo's healing. Silko's dramatic purpose, on the other hand, is to introduce and familiarize the spectator with the realm of "tradition" that a figure like Ts'eh embodies. Margaret Walker's *Jubilee* (2016), is a book on her grandmother's transformation from an Afro-American slave to an unconventional woman. Before composing the story, she performed research on biographical books and papers relating to law, held conversations, visited the records, and traveled around the United States. Her grandma, on the other hand, was her main mentor and the one who shared her true story, and "Vyry was unlettered and untutored" and was modeled after her. Though the reader cannot listen to Vyry's story directly from her, Walker's book contains a verbal antiquity of it that has been passed down through ancestral "oral tradition." *Jubilee*

employs traditional proverbs and melodies passed down from her grandmothers to depict their suffering before and during servitude. Every section begins with songs and proverbs that integrate faith, language, and narrative to resist atrocities. *Jubilee* technically interrupts black associations by retaining Vyry's dialect and tribal history while exposing the horrors of oppression and objectification. The traditional African religion is also linked to their freedom as their collective identity. Although Walker typically refers to the period following the "Civil War" as a period of recuperation, an expression reflecting events rather than human life, *Jubilee* refers to the period following the emancipation of "slaves." In this way, it celebrates and honors modern-day slave freedom while simultaneously establishing distinct cultural historiography and heritage. In her story, Vyry's father mistreats her, subjecting her to abuse, neglect, and disease. *Jubilee* regains her sadness and suffering as a result of Vyry's imprisonment, as well as what she calls, the "postbellum racial" persecution she faced with her children and husband(s). It exhumes a history that the oppressed would want to avoid enslavement in the form of writing, literature, and expression to plead for acknowledgment, introspection, and appreciation for the agony of slavery. It also commemorates Vyry's bravery and kindness, particularly towards those who mistreated her. The narrative discovers and honors Vyry's "black womanhood" and "oral history" towards the ending, heralding the tenacity and importance of Afro-American living, Walker pens,

"Every nigger's gwine to own a mule,  
Jubili, Jubilo!  
Every nigger's gwine to own a mule,  
And live like Adam in the golden rule,  
And send his chillun to the white folk's school  
In the year of Jubilo!"

\_\_\_\_ Margaret Walker

Maya Angelou an autobiographical writer of "*I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*" (1969), is an author who documented all of her pleasant moments in her writing. She is an author who underwent a horrible experience that rendered her nearly speechless and is known for her creative work and numerous books. Though she was born in Missouri, she lived a large portion of her youth in the "Stamps," her ancestral home. She was subjected to stress and violence in her childhood, which caused her to "stop speaking." This hazardous road severely cuts her youth prematurely, forcing

her to lose a lot of her idealism, childhood, and naivety. From a life filled with destitution and violence, she rose to fame with writings like her most popular autobiography, *'I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings,'* which demonstrates a desire for escape and fulfillment. The narrative, like the melody of the imprisoned bird, is an offering delivered through "the heart's deep core, from a depth of passion." The writer wishes for the bird to be freed from its oppressive confinement to ensure that it might rise devoid of the constraints, boundaries, and restrictions set forth by an antagonistic environment.

"I know Why the Caged Bird Sings;  
A free bird leaps  
on the back of the wind  
and floats downstream  
till the current ends  
and dips his wing  
in the orange sun rays  
and dares to claim the sky...  
But a caged bird stands on the grave of dreams  
so he opens his throat to sing.  
His wings are clipped and his feet are tied  
So he opens his throat to sing.  
The caged bird sings  
with a fearful trill  
for the caged bird  
sings of freedom."  
\_\_\_\_ Maya Angelou

Kolodny, in "Dancing through the Minefield: Some Observations on the Theory, Practice, and Politics of Feminist Literary Criticism," pens, "literary history...is a fiction." It informs a "traditional formation of the literary canon of literary history as a social construction." It outlines the important, insignificant, and neglected writings by prevailing cultural customs and traditions. For instance, the concentration of "Western literary canon" is on books by learned "white men" because this group has contributed significantly to its creation. It had consequences past "aesthetic" qualities and reinforced the prevailing worldview of the day, ignoring literature written by various groups and cultures to favor material of a fixed ideology. In this respect, the "monolithic nature of the canon" is revisited and revised by registering and valuing women's

writings. There existed no “history” of American women authors till the last two decades of the twentieth century, notwithstanding that they ever had a “History... that it was something worth investigating. For a long time, it just didn’t exist as a subject in people’s minds. And then, after that, it came up against a lot of different ideological shifts among scholars that made it seem like a problematic thing to do. To write a literary history you have to make distinctions. You have to make selections. There was a real wave of feeling against that kind of hierarchy, against the literary canon. Everybody began to move away from literary history to something more like an encyclopedia, where you wouldn’t make any distinctions, and you wouldn’t create any hierarchy, you would just try to list everybody separately.” (Showalter 2009)

Showalter says in contemporary times, it is high time to take a step forward and recognize these “distinctions” as there exist a whole lot of female authors, “They are important” and can survive this kind of “judging.” Their absence in “literary history,” means the book of “encyclopedia” can replace them and every “individual” woman will then be defined by the same lens to undermine their separate identity. Moreover, this is unbearable for female authors to be known in positions of “their overall contribution to the American tradition.” One has to take the women writers “one at a time” to interpret their distinct traditions, the place they are coming from, their race, situations, placements community, and above all their subjective, personal expression, experiences, and aesthetics. Therefore, “we need a literary history and we need one for the 21st century.”

*“Most of the world’s population, through history, have not been able to ‘bear witness for themselves.”*

\_\_\_ Joyce Carol Oates

### **Conclusion**

Contemporary women's writings showcase a variety of involvements, reflecting the feminine space in modern times. This variety in literature is too substantial to be considered a universal one, as it reflects harmony and agreement within the group, despite gender differences.

In contemporary times, it is crucial to acknowledge the contributions of women authors to the American tradition. Recognizing their distinct traditions, place of origin, race, situations, and personal expression is essential for a comprehensive literary history that respects the unique identities of these women and their contributions to the American tradition.

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