

Women in Literature: Their Journey So Far

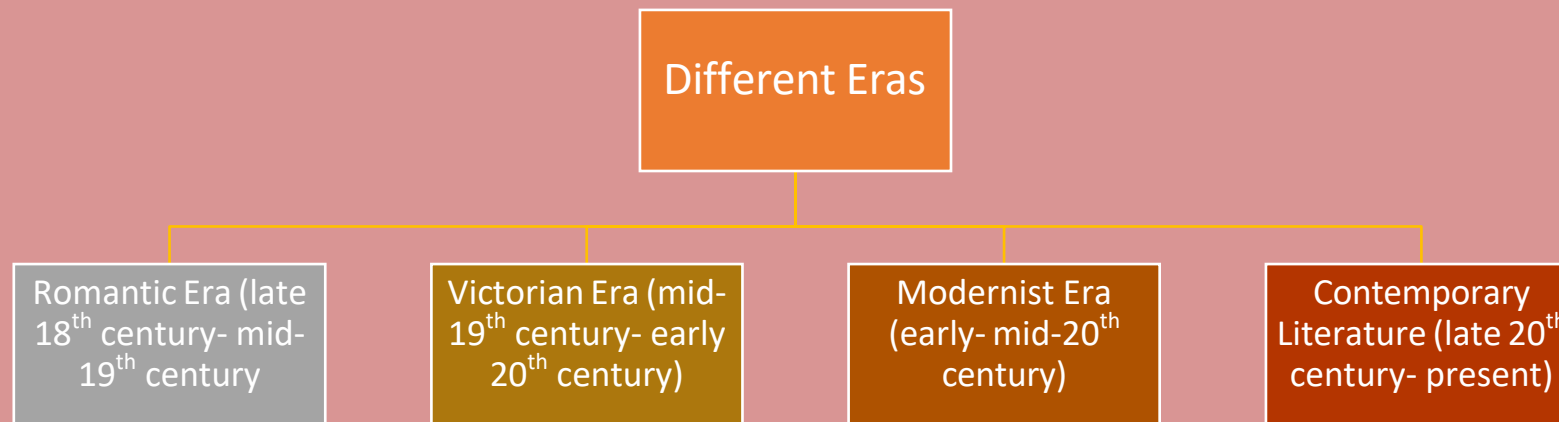
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An Introduction

The role of women in literature reflects the societal changes and a shift in the perception of gender roles. Although being suppressed for long time in history, nothing has ever prevented them to express 'her story'. Women have made wide range of experiments in the world of literature.

From *Jane Austen* to *Taylor Jenkins Reid*, women in different ages have experimented with variety of genres and created lasting impression on the minds of people.

Let's dive deep and explore their contributions in different eras:



The Romantic Era

Romantic era was a period of change and creativity, when emotions, nature and individualism were emphasized by writers. In the predominantly male literary world, authors like *Jane Austen* and *Mary Shelly* came up and carved out spaces for themselves, produced such quality works that are even valued in the 21st century.

Jane Austen, through her creations, like, “*Pride and Prejudice*”, “*Emma*” and “*Sense and Sensibility*”, had brilliantly captured the scenarios of her times through simple yet deep love stories that also reflected a woman’s life in those times.

Also, it was *Mary Shelly* who wrote the first science fiction novel- “*Frankenstein*” in 1818, blending gothic horror and philosophy. Their writings were not only meant for entertainment, but they also challenged the existing societal norms and provoked discussions about gender roles and societal expectations.

The Victorian Era

This was a period when feminist movements and thoughts were rising among individuals. This age saw a rise in the number of women writers. Some notable works by the woman authors in this era were- *Emily Bronte's "Wuthering Heights"*, *Charlotte Bronte's "Jane Eyre"* and *George Eliot's "Middlemarch"*.

Through realistic, complex characters, these novels provided a voice to women's lives and struggles. The writings reflected on the rapid developments taking place, class conflict and addressed social issues.

The Modernist Era

This age witnessed a change in the literary styles and themes. Women also experimented with different genres and styles. Apart from publishing novels, *Virginia Woolf* wrote influential essays like “*A Room of One’s Own*” that advocated for women’s intellectual and financial independence.

This period also gave us the “*Queen of Crime*”, *Agatha Christie*, who wrote some 66 detective novels. Women, in this era, continued to address gender issues along with issues like identity and independence.

Contemporary Literature

In this 21st century, women have done experiments in a wide range of genres, ranging from fantasy, romance to crime thrillers. They have addressed various issues like gender, politics, and racism through their books. There are endless names when it comes about mentioning woman authors in this era.

From *Angie Thomas*, *Erin Morgenstern*, *Gillian Flynn* to *Taylor Jenkins Reid*, *Paula Hawkins*, *Holly Jackson*, each author has developed a unique style of writing. While in “*Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo*”, *Taylor Jenkins Reid* has written about scandalous life of a Hollywood star, *Angie Thomas* in “*The Hate You Give*” has spread the message of “Black Lives Matter”.

On the other hand, authors like *Gillian Flynn*, *Paula Hawkins* have written bestselling crime thrillers like “*Gone Girl*”, “*The Girl on the Train*”. It was a woman who produced the greatest fantasy series of all time- *Harry Potter series* by *J.K. Rowling*.

Conclusion

Women have time and again proved that they are nothing less than men when it comes to writing. They can produce equally valued works as men. Even in times, when they were forbidden from reading and writing, they have fabricated works, considered masterpieces now. Sometimes they had to take up pseudo names, like *Mary Ann Evans* (better known as *George Eliot*) did, to publish their works because of the existing societal norms but that did not hamper their passion and desire for writing. Their journey so far has been worth the suppression they had suffered in the history.

But it is also clear that sometimes women authors even now, strive to get the same recognition as male authors and this issue has been made evident through their writings. To conclude, women continue to provide fresh perspectives, bring up new issues and address societal norms and expectations through their literary works. As we look to the future, their voices will remain vital and shape people's thoughts, making literature a powerful tool for social changes.

Thank you!