

Feminist Criticism and Social Change (RLE Feminist Theory): Sex, class and race in literature and culture



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This lively and controversial collection of essays sets out to theorize and practice a 'materialist-feminist' criticism of literature and culture. Such a criticism is based on the view that the material conditions in which men and women live are central to an understanding of culture and society. It emphasises the relation of gender to other categories of analysis, such as class and race, and considers the connection between ideology and cultural practice, and the ways in which all relations of power change with changing social and economic conditions.

By presenting a wide range of work by major feminist scholars, this anthology in effect *defines* as well as illustrates the materialist-feminist tendency in current literary criticism. The essays in the first part of the book examine race, ideology, and the literary canon and explore the ways in which other critical discourse, such as those of deconstruction and French feminism, might be useful to a feminist and materialist criticism. The second part of the book contains examples of such criticism in practice, with studies of individual works, writers and ideas. An introduction by the editors situates the collected essays in relation both to one another and to a shared materialist/feminist project.

Feminist Criticism and Social Change demonstrates the important contribution of materialist-feminist criticism to our understanding of literature and society, and fulfils a crucial need among those concerned with gender and its relation to criticism.

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