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Where did the heat go?
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Twenty-eight years since the publication of Elaine Showalter's collection of essays *The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature, and Theory*, feminist critical theory welcomes a new generation of female scholars who enter academia after the women's rights movements of twentieth century. My review revisits the importance of this foundational text in feminist critical approaches because the new generation of female scholars has lost touch with the anger and passion in Showalter's writings, which are now replaced with the theoretical jargon of psychoanalysis and other criticisms. Even though the feminist critical revolution is a part of history, it should not be abandoned into the past, for the new generation of female scholars still has to live up to certain expectations set forth by the women in *The New Feminist Criticism*.

Showalter, retired professor of English at Princeton University, introduces readers to the feminist critical revolution, its accomplishments, and ambitions. *The New Feminist Criticism* is organized into three parts: the first set of essays challenges the institutions that have excluded female literature from the literary canon, the second explores the effect of feminist literary theory on women's culture and politics, and the third discusses different theoretical approaches to women's literature. The essays in this collection are often lyrical,

passionate, and compelling, directed toward an audience of both female readers eager for literary reform and traditional male academics in warning of the changes to come. The author's purpose is to inform on the progress of feminist critical theory and encourage still hesitant American revolutionary women to move towards literary criticism.

In addition to introduction material, Showalter includes two of her essays, which convey the full-force of feminist sentiment in the 1980s. She calls for a women-centered literary criticism, independent of male traditional and theoretical hand-me-downs, though not isolated from them, in her article "Toward a Feminist Poetics" (1985) and suggests the term "gynocritics" as the most coherent and unadulterated form of feminist literary theory. One of these sections also delineates the history of women's literature into the three stages: Feminine, Feminist, and Female. The essay "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness" (1981) examines four theoretical positions in women's literature - biological, linguistic, psychological, and cultural - and Showalter argues that feminist critique should reflect the latter. Showalter analyzes the characteristics of the biological perspective as championed by Helene Cixous and Adrienne Rich, the differences of male and female language, the struggles of "lack" in Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis, and how these approaches overlap in social contexts. Furthermore, *The New Criticism* is an anthology of women's voices like those of Nina Baym, Sandra M. Gilbert, Susan Gubar, and others who have contributed to feminist, black feminist, and lesbian critical theory.

The ideas presented by Showalter are not transcendent - not much in literary criticism ever is - but the way in which they are presented should be acclaimed. Showalter writes with confidence and enthusiasm, and the other women who took part in the early developmental stages of gynocritics inspire readers of the new generation to continue the debate. *The New Feminist Criticism* should be revisited by female literary scholars as a model for present feminist discourse for the fervor of revolution.