

Shakespeare, Aphra Behn, and the Canon: Approaching Literature

When it comes to the canon of English literature, William Shakespeare is a name that immediately springs to mind. His works have been studied and celebrated for centuries, and his influence on the English language and storytelling cannot be overstated. However, it is important not to overlook the contributions of other talented and influential writers throughout history. One such writer is Aphra Behn, a fascinating figure whose works challenged societal norms and pushed the boundaries of literature in her time.

The Magnificence of Shakespeare

Before we delve into Aphra Behn's remarkable story, let's take a moment to appreciate the enduring legacy of William Shakespeare. From iconic tragedies like "Romeo and Juliet" and "Macbeth" to beloved comedies like "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and "Twelfth Night," Shakespeare's plays continue to captivate audiences and provoke thought.

Shakespeare's ability to masterfully craft characters and themes that resonate with people from all walks of life is truly remarkable. His extraordinary command of language and his innovative storytelling techniques have set the standard for playwrights and writers for centuries to come.

Shakespeare, Aphra Behn and the Canon (Approaching Literature)

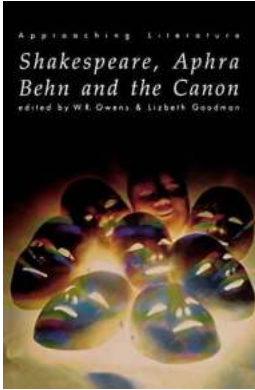
by Gerald Nachman (1st Edition, Kindle Edition)

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Aphra Behn: A Trailblazer of her Time

While Shakespeare's contributions to literature cannot be denied, it is essential to widen the perspective and explore the works of other influential voices. Aphra Behn, an English playwright and novelist born in the 17th century, was one such voice that challenged the status quo and paved the way for future generations of writers.

Aphra Behn's life is as intriguing as her work. She was one of the first women in England to earn her living primarily through writing, which was an unprecedented accomplishment in a male-dominated industry. Behn's plays, novels, and poetry explored themes of gender, colonialism, and power dynamics in ways that were ahead of her time.

One of her most famous works, "Oroonoko," is a powerful novel that explores the experience of slavery and the struggle for freedom. Behn's frank and compassionate portrayal of the characters challenges societal norms and sheds light on the complexities of the human condition.

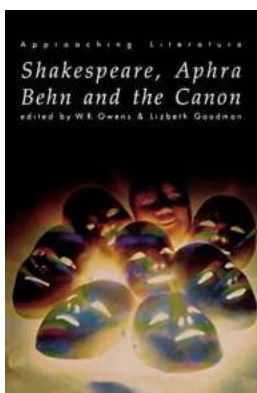
Redefining the Canon

As we reconsider and expand the literary canon, it is imperative to include voices like Aphra Behn's alongside Shakespeare's. The traditional canon has often focused on white, male authors, leaving insufficient space for the perspectives and experiences of women and people of color. By embracing a more inclusive canon, we not only celebrate the diversity of human experiences but also uncover hidden gems that have been overlooked for far too long.

Often, literature reflects the society in which it is created, and by broadening our understanding of classic works, we gain a more complete picture of history and humanity. Aphra Behn's works, along with those of other marginalized writers, provide invaluable insights into various aspects of life and challenge us to question the narratives we may have previously taken for granted.

When discussing the canon of English literature, it is essential to recognize the immense contribution of William Shakespeare. However, it is equally important to give voice to other talented writers like Aphra Behn, who have made significant contributions to literature and culture.

By expanding the canon to incorporate a wider array of voices, we not only honor the richness and diversity of human experiences, but we also create a more inclusive literary landscape that resonates with readers from all backgrounds.



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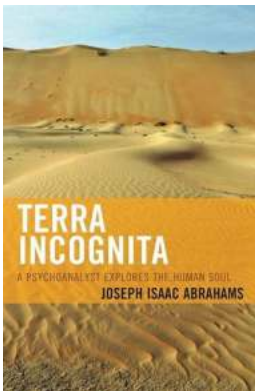
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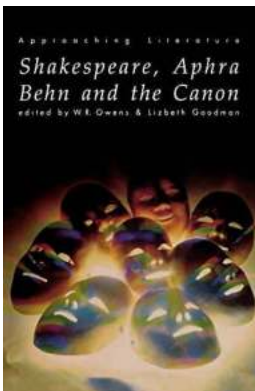


A clear to the idea of the canon, exploring the process by which certain works, and not others, receive high cultural status. The work of Shakespeare and Aphra Behn is used to illustrate and challenge this process.



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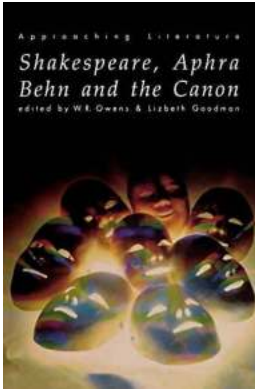
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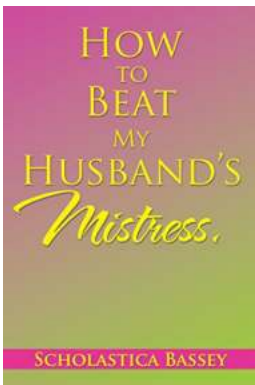
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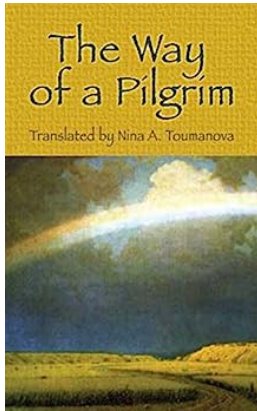
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