

## Unit 3: Language Change

### ANALYSING TEXTS FROM DIFFERENT TIMES: THE ROLE OF WOMEN

**Text A** is an extract from *What a Young Wife Ought to Know*, an advice manual written by Mrs Emma F Angell Drake and published in 1901.

**Text B** is an extract from *How to Be a Woman*, a non-fiction book written by columnist Caitlin Moran and published in 2012 that she described as 'part memoir, part rant'.

*Referring in detail to both texts and to relevant ideas from language study, analyse the ways language has changed over time.*

### Text A

#### CHAPTER V.

##### WHAT SHALL A YOUNG WIFE EXPECT TO BE TO HER HUSBAND?

The Young Wife Should Seek to be Her Husband's Equal, but not His Counterpart.—The Recognized Centre of the Home.—Woman's True Greatness.—Man's Helpmeet.—Mrs. Gladstone's Part in Her Husband's Greatness.—Should Attract Her Husband from the Club to the Home.—Continuing to be Attractive in Dress and Manners.—Should Accept both Wifehood and Motherhood.—Should Keep Pace with His Mental Growth.—Guarding Against Improper Use of Literary Clubs, Reading Circles, etc.—Solomon's Picture of the Model Young Wife.—A Converted Heathen's Estimate of His Christian Wife . . . 65-72

Every young wife should be a good home-maker. An Eastern proverb says: "The wife is the household." And the Japanese say, "The house rests upon the mother." O woman! guard your treasure sacredly, this most priceless marriage gift, the title and blessing of home-keeper. You should make the home so attractive that no club can win the husband away from it in his leisure hours. You should make it, not only a haven of rest for him, but a place for delightful entertainments of his friends at all suitable times. However, the thoughtful husband will not invite his friends to his home, as a rule, without a word sent to his wife, that she may make any little needed preparation, and so be her happiest self with the guests.

The young wife should take not less, but more pains to make herself as attractive after as before marriage. A soiled ribbon, an untidy toilet, may seem trifling things, but they tell much of the esteem in which she holds her husband and her home. Not less but more care is needed to retain the love and respect of the man of her choice, than to win it. The pretty dress, the color of the ribbon, the manner of dressing the hair, are not affected, but chosen deliberately because she knows they are pleasing to him.

She should be the willing mother of his children. Marriage comprehends not only wifehood, but motherhood. To-day this is hardly believed by the many, and we may well mourn it as fatal, not only to the future of the American race, but to the best and highest interests of the home.

She should seek to keep pace with him in his mental growth, and never for a moment think that she is advancing his highest interests when she is denying herself that which would contribute to her development in order that he may advance. The marriage contract is not so one-sided a matter as this.

The thoughtful husband will never allow such self-abnegation on the part of the wife. What he reads, she should read; and if she have not the time, he should read it aloud, while her hands are busy with the household cares.

## Text B

What is feminism? Simply the belief that women should be as free as men, however nuts, dim, deluded, badly dressed, fat, receding, lazy and smug they might be. Are you a feminist? Hahaha. Of course you are.

We need to reclaim the word 'feminism'. We need the word 'feminism' back real bad. When statistics come in saying that only 29% of American women would describe themselves as feminist - and only 42% of British women - I used to think, What do you think feminism IS, ladies? What part of 'liberation for women' is not for you? Is it freedom to vote? The right not to be owned by the man you marry? The campaign for equal pay? 'Vogue' by Madonna? Jeans? Did all that good shit GET ON YOUR NERVES? Or were you just DRUNK AT THE TIME OF THE SURVEY?

But, of course, you might be asking yourself, 'Am I a feminist? I might not be. I don't know! I still don't know what it is! I'm too knackered and confused to work it out. That curtain pole really still isn't up! I don't have time to work out if I am a women's libber! There seems to be a lot to it. WHAT DOES IT MEAN?' I understand. So here is the quick way of working out if you're a feminist. Put your hand in your pants.

- a) Do you have a vagina? and
- b) Do you want to be in charge of it?

If you said 'yes' to both, then congratulations! You're a feminist.

You can tell whether some misogynistic societal pressure is being exerted on women by calmly enquiring, 'And are the men doing this, as well?' If they aren't, chances are you're dealing with what we strident feminists refer to as 'some total fucking bullshit'.