Some form of ideological challenge to the patriarchal order was mounted in the eighteenth century.. The early landmark in this context is; Mary Wollstonecraft’s ‘A Vindication of the Rights of Woman’(1792). The book sought to resituate the terms under which women were viewed and understood. It was radical position taken by Wollstonecraft vis-à-vis the rights of women. Many of the central concerns of the women’s liberation movement are encapsulated in Wollstonecraft’s book: the idea of equality, examining the patriarchal ordering of the world, and questioning of situation of women as objects of utility. Later, in England, Virginia Woolf articulated the same ideological concerns in the seminal works like: ‘A Room of One’s Own’(1929) and ‘Three Guineas’(1938). Woolf highlighted the hypocrisy of the patriarchal system by pointing out the strategies involved in the subjugation of women. In: ‘A Room of One’s Own’, Woolf describes a hypothetical situation where the presence of a woman in a university turf is a great cause for concern. The deconstruction of the ideological assumptions contained by the canonical texts now became influential in building up of a rallying process for the feminists throughout the twentieth century.

One preoccupation of feminist theory is the emphasis upon the political aspect of thee language-realty relation: In refusing to accept the terms of representation simply as givens, feminist theory rereads texts, not to deny the dominant motifs in circulation but to see the politics that constitutes the textuality that makes them so. The feminist theory as such is concerned about the relation between language and reality which is a political one as it impacts the identity of women. The position, condition and status of women constitute the primary focus of feminist theory as it negotiates the politics of language and reality. Feminist theorists question the strategies involved in the representation of the ‘real’ and this generally leads to a programme of alternative reading positions. The context of production, the factors influencing the culture from which a text emanates and the reading of the language-reality relation are the preoccupation of the feminist theory. In examining the relations between language and reality, feminists have often taken a historicists approach, where the specifities of a given culture structure are placed under scrutiny. Now something about the language-reality relation. Well, the structures that organize reality in particular ways are motivated by conditions of power. For example, the perpetration of the system of patriarchy in the society. The degree and manners of perpetration of such a system is determined by various factors –many of these factors remain ingrained into the operating matrices of a culture. Feminists tend to point out such politics that work behind the canonical texts. They also point out how inside and outside the home the popular culture tends to produce the image of women as ‘signifier’ of sexuality. Feminism thus became a weapon for the women’s movement. It started off as a movement for consciousness-raising and then finally landed upon linguistic and psycho-analytic theories.

The issue of women’s identity: Women’s identity is analyzed by configuring women at the backdrop of the subject/object relation. Like other discourses highlighting hierarchization, feminism too deals with the strategies informing patriarchy, which situates women in particular ways in culture and society.. Feminist theorists identify patriarchy –literally the rule of the a father-at work in the home, the state, the church or other religious systems, the law, education, the workplace, in culture at large.

Feminism thus entails, among other things, a reading position through which both literature and cultural conditions are subjected to scrutiny.

In context of all the above, I send you pics of excerpts from (1) Woolf’s ‘A Room…’ and (2) A Reader’s Guide to Contemporary Theory.

That’s all regarding Feminist Theories. Hope, all these would be of some help for you. I shall be awaiting for your views. Bye, take care!