



Gloria Jean Watkins a.k.a. *bell hooks* is an American scholar whose work examined the varied perceptions of black women and black women writers and the development of feminist identities. Watkins grew up in a segregated community of the American South. At age 19 she began writing what would become her first full-length book, *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism*, which was published in 1981. Hooks assumed her pseudonym, the name of her great-grandmother, to honor female legacies; she preferred to spell it in all lowercase letters to focus attention on her message rather than herself.